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LETTERS

TO

VARIOUS FRIENDS,

BY THE LATE MRS. STEVENS.

EDITED BY HER SISTER.

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P R E F A C E.

IT is a grateful duty to fulfil my obligation of presenting to the many dear friends of the departed and beloved disciple of the Lord Jesus this sweet fruit of her friendly confidential correspondence with her fellow-members in Christ ; in doing which I feel assured it will afford an interesting engagement to those who wish to trace more of the inward mind of the beloved writer than was possible to be developed through the channel of a brief memoir written by another. In these letters, many incidents may be observed from allusions, wherein she will often be seen in circumstances that none but herself could unfold. It must be borne in mind that they are not offered with any secondary or inferior purpose of presenting a specimen of finished epistolary composition ; they pretend to no such distinction, but are the unaffected, unstudied effusions of a heart of love, for Christ's sake, written under the pressure of urgent engagements—in midnight hours—in seasons of sickness—in moments snatched for the occasion, at times when most people would have rested their hands in listless inactivity, rather than have seized the pen to execute the expression of their thoughts,—the flowings of a soul, out of its abundance delighting to testify of the grace of the Lord, and to strengthen the feeble knees.

Whilst reading them, much of the “*honey*” which

drops from the Rock may be gathered, by which, like Jonathan, (1 Sam. xiv. 29.) her own “eyes were enlightened,” and by which they who taste the same are refreshed during their conflict with the enemies of our peace.

When pressed to undertake the mournful, but consolatory work of preparing the memorial of this beloved and privileged child of God, I was greatly assisted by the free and voluntary surrender of her letters, accompanied by many earnest and affectionate solicitations that such remnants of her christian sympathizing love should be preserved, as in the following prevailing terms: ‘I cannot but think Mrs. S—’s Letters must be of great value, and that were you to publish her correspondence alone you would greatly extend her usefulness, and exhibit her character in a light peculiarly attractive and edifying. May it please the Giver of every good gift specially to assist you in your meditated work, and greatly to prosper it with his blessing. To serve the Lord Christ is the only work of real interest or value, and when we glorify Him in His people, we do but make out and give effect to His all-wise and merciful designs. Surely your dear sister was a *chosen vessel*, and it becomes us to glorify God in her.’

It is thus they are offered, in the name of the Lord. Running through the long period of her scene of labour, they exhibit from first to last a consistent life of faith and love, in most humble and persevering dependant trust and unwearied zeal; the same in holy affiance in the Lord, when she recorded her last sentiments, as when, in the ardour of youthful first love, she began her christian course under regenerating conversion of the Holy Ghost, who worketh that repentance in the heart so sublimely described by the Apostle as being unto salvation, (2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.) and producing that ani-

mated lively evidence of its origin in grace, by its correspondent fruits ;—“what carefulness,” “what fear,” “what vehement desire,” yea, “what zeal !”

Is it necessary to apologize for presenting so *many* of these remnants of christian love ? It was not my original intention ; but after having begun the work many were added to my store by friends who possessed them, and as it did not accord with my idea to make a *partial selection* for a purpose of exhibiting what might appear the most attractive to general readers, either for matter or composition, I received and present them in the way which, to my own mind, is not only more profitable but more interesting to the genuine affections of such as can appreciate the free, easy, unstudied boon of a heart ever prompt to express its christian love wherever it might be applied as a welcome solace to a fellow-pilgrim. In this view I have been scrupulously careful to leave them without any alteration, not esteeming the liberty of editorship to extend further than to correct any obvious error of a hasty pen, and to omit such communications as touched upon the private concerns of the individual addressed. So doing, many minor points are casually remaining which come home to the common concerns of our daily conversation in this world. I have not been careful to observe the dates ; the few first will sufficiently mark their early season in the spring of the *new life*. I have purposely placed them there as a faithful witness, and they are the only ones of that particular tenor which have been committed to my observation.

The strains of love in christian communion and counsel, addressed without respect of persons, are so uniform and so genuine, that none can doubt what it was she felt to be the uniting bond, and that there was no one to whom she would say, “I have no need of thee.”

She saw the redeemed as they who *alike* were raised from their natural outcast condition, and who, by the Lord's selecting love, were *alike* clothed with the broidered work, shod with the badger's skin, girded with fine linen, covered with silk, and decked with ornaments. (Ez. xvi. 10—12.) To one who looked and meditated upon these invisible decorations by the Lord's own hand, of what account was the imitative magnificence of the accidents of human distinction! She respected indeed the differences of providential station and dignified influence, but these faded beneath the lustre of the Lord's own handy-work, which the eye of faith discerned. All was as nothing in comparison with the robe of righteousness, and the garments washed white in the blood of the Lamb, on them who were called to be saints!

There is a very interesting peculiarity to be observed in these letters quite in accordance with her constant consistent character, namely, that extraordinary adaptation of all her feelings to those to whom she was called to administer. It was no artificial plan, but the spring of a sympathetic, experienced soul, which had trod the thorny path to the way of peace, and therefore could enter into the deeps of other tried pilgrims, and which she did as a member, a *fellow-member* of Christ's body, so that she suffered *with* them that did suffer, rejoiced *with* them that did rejoice—and as bound *with* them who felt the captive's chain, raised her hallelujahs to Him who *hath* broken the iron fetters which enter into the soul and led captivity captive!—and “doth deliver!”

Thus we see her one with the disciple of Jesus under whatever circumstances. Her heart seems first to recognize and realize the same trials or conflicts in her own soul, and then to *know*, by what she herself had learned of the Lord, *that* which was best for application

and counsel to the one requiring helping grace, and thither to direct for all suitable supplies.

We may trace her through all the gracious bonds of spiritual relationship, the mother, the friend, the nurse, the sister in Christ, and her love powerful in all. It was the *grace of love* that flowed, therefore it was impartial and abounded unto many, though certainly we trace when her congenialities were most felt and where her heart seems to have acknowledged peculiar union of spirit, whilst love pervaded to all.

An incidental confirmation of what I have just written is afforded from one of her affectionate flock in a note lately received; speaking of her high spiritual attainments combined with her warm affectionate disposition, her readiness of access and sympathy that entered into every little circumstance belonging to the numbers who poured into her ear their troubles or their joys, it is added, “I used to joke her and ask her how she could remember each one’s? She replied, ‘*O my heart is full of little cells.*’ It really was wonderful how minutely she did recollect every particular, and that with so much interest. We seem only *beginning* to know our loss. May we be enabled to follow her as she followed Christ.”

To those who have shared her personal instructions, the perusal of these letters, I believe, will be attended with affecting influence, as demonstrating the inward love of her heart to the flock. Surely this was the second principle of her soul, every thing was given to it, every interest submitted to it. They will see whence sprung the bond of her union with them. It must needs be an affecting developement to read such an unfolding of those constant sentiments as are contained in her private letters—letters which I never could have expected should come under my review, and were so little likely

ever to come under the eye of any beyond the persons to whom they were addressed.

If her spiritual devotion rose as it did, to seek high elevation in the Lord; it is clearly manifest, and by this same testimony of her letters, that her humility also was deep and abiding, and kept in continual exercise through a watchful eye of holy jealousy to detect the risings of nature, the flesh that lusteth against the spirit, under which conflict she evinced her integrity and distress of soul, crying out with St. Paul, “O wretched—that I am!” To her very last moment she ceased not to profess her sense of the ruin of the fall; avowing the humiliating truth, “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing,” and she lay at the feet of Jesus washing them with her tears, and as one said of her, ‘drying them with the ardour of her aspiring love.’

In these depths and heights she became capacitated for the bearing of those ‘burdens of others’ in a sympathy so quick and ready, so apprehensive and intimate, as at once to gain the confidence of enquiring and distressed souls, who felt that she took their case upon her heart, and as it were blended it with her own. She knew who took all our sicknesses and carried all our sorrows, and she bore those of others with her own to Him who ever careth for us. She had by grace drank of His spirit, and He dwelt in her heart by faith. Under the influence of this experience she endured her own heavy and protracted sufferings, embracing them in conformity with her beloved Lord. In the light of his countenance she exclaimed, ‘O how vile am I—how glorious is Jesus!’

It is useful to bring this out to full observation, lest the inexperienced reader should be disheartened by the steady energetic course of this sweet disciple, and

should be led to esteem her out of the common circumstances of every child of Adam, and of every child of God ; struggling and conflicting in the internal spiritual warfare, but encouraged by the Holy Spirit's word, " a broken and contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise."

If the readers bear in mind that the calling of grace is to glorify the Lord, they will not fail to notice and admire the wisdom which ordains the deep exercises of soul through which instruments destined for his special service are appointed to pass ; that they who receive a mission to the lost may *know* what it *is* to be *LOST* in its fullest sense, that with more earnestness of zeal they may proclaim Him who came to seek and *save* the *lost*, and also that they may know the advantages which Satan takes of our convictions as well as of our ignorance, and be taught to wrestle not only " against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places," which would ever strive to darken the light of the glorious gospel lest it should shine in our hearts.

This humble disciple persevered by grace through every conflict, and was more than conqueror through Him that loved her, and heard her cries and groanings of spirit with His ready help, and out of wave upon wave of temptation or trial, in anguish of mind or agony of body, did He faithfully present himself—her Father—her present God and her Redeemer, even unto, in, and through, the deep waters of the passage of death !

And now she is departed, who whilst remaining amongst us was so strong a bond in the fellowship of all. How constraining should it be to those who survive, to seek to the *same grace*, drawing it from the *same* fountain of love which supplied her every need, and

applying it in active self-denying practice for their own, each looking on the other as *fellow-members* in CHRIST. I dare not and would not present a lower object and bond ; but surely that heart which so loved all in Him would rejoice to welcome them in the realms of glory, as having here walked in association of that love, to be united with her for ever in that abiding and greatest grace as *one body in Christ*. O may the Lord pour out his grace upon us all, that “speaking the truth in love we may grow up *into Him* in all things, which is the Head even Christ” “till we all come, in the unity of the faith, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

Earnestly supplicating the blessing of the Lord on this additional humble tribute to the praise of his gracious name, may that abounding mercy which is yet in store for the full ingathering of his chosen flock be seen, as a *foretaste* of the future, to be the destination of *every individual* member of his body when he looketh upon them in the beams of the sun of righteousness, charging them with the uplifting and assuring voice, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.”

LETTERS.

I.

Lowly Outpouring of Heart under Experience of Self-abasement, combined with Holy Zeal for others and aspiring Ardour of Soul.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I WRITE this note in part to ask your interest at a throne of grace, that the Lord would be pleased to remove from me a weight of conscious sinfulness, which sinks me so low that my hours are frequently spent in complaints and sighs ; when if I had a more cheerful hope I might have much more time for usefulness, and be much more fruitful in myself. No attempts of mine can remove the burden. I do not want consolation—I want faithfulness and sanctification. Oh ! could I but be assured that my soul were endowed with the spirit of adoption, and that my transient views of redeeming grace were not delusive, then I could contentedly, yea joyfully, follow my Saviour through the most dreary shades ; but let me learn humility and patience of spirit, seeing that I am not worthy to be fed with the crumbs from under the table.

I hope, my dear friend, that the Lord is daily realizing the life of faith and love in your breast. O that the mercies to which you have been lately called may have taught you how profitable is a life of labour and exertion in the Lord's service! I have much thought of you since your occupations were so many, and I cannot but observe how truly gracious and faithful our Lord is, in every situation to which we are called, giving us strength and grace proportioned to our necessity, and glorifying himself in our weakness and our wants. How bountiful a Lord do we serve!—how rich in mercy and how plentiful in love!—so that he makes all things work together for our good, and circumstances seemingly quite opposite to the spiritual life are by his grace made fruitful to our best life! 'Tis the knowledge of his worth and goodness which sinks my ungrateful heart so low; for oh! where can such sweetness be—such suitableness—such abundance—such excellence! I wonder at myself when I find my treacherous heart capable of forgetting him for one moment on whom I surely ought sensibly to live and move and have my being; for who can owe to Christ's redeeming love what I owe if ever I rest with him!

I know somewhat of this is experienced in your heart, but I can never believe there is such another as mine in this sinful world. Oh may we not spend our sighs in unmeaning complaints, but in holy wrestlings! Oh may each fresh discovery of a short-coming in any gift or grace put us upon the more diligent cultivation of it—for the diligent soul shall surely be fed, and the patient waiting for God shall assuredly be answered.

I am very anxious that all and each of us should walk with all holy and earnest circumspection, and that Jesus Christ and his blessed Spirit might shine in all our words, and ways, and thoughts. Blessed be God,

the race will soon be run, the marriage-day will soon dawn, and our heavenly bridegroom receive his redeemed and beautified wife. Oh may we sinners be of the blessed number, who, having made themselves ready—ready in apprehended righteousness of faith, and being clothed with fine linen,—may have the shame of their youth hid, and all past sins buried in forgiving love! My heart pants for the living God—my soul is athirst for God—O for the overflowing of his rivers of life and joy, and for the glorious entrance into his heavenly kingdom.

Alas! my pilgrimage is lengthened—my warfare is not accomplished—my soul is yet in the furnace; but all is well, much dross remains to be consumed, and if the great refiner sitteth by, the true gold of his grace shall sustain no loss.

The Lord bless you, my beloved fellow pilgrim—stand fast, my beloved friend—O ponder, pray and meditate—keep all these things in thy heart, and let us, as faithful Christian soldiers, act faithfully to the cross.

Yours, in faithful attachment,

M. S.

II.

Depression with Confidence.

I HAVE taken the pen from my sister, my beloved friend, though I can but write a line or two to be in time for the post. It seems some refreshment to commune with you in this lesser way, and I am thankful that there is such a mode of conveying some of the affections of our heart. My thoughts have been often

with you since we parted, and if I could pray as I would, I should have my desires poured out in your behalf. But I am very much oppressed in my spirit, and my evidence seems damped and dark. When this is the case how much do we feel the throne of grace obstructed!—and those sweet enjoyments, which the light of God's countenance alone can give, are exchanged for heaviness and distress! However, this thing we know, that it is far better to follow the Lord in dreariness than to possess our consolations in this present scene. Blessed be His name that all things out of Him are void of true comfort, and that our peace of mind bears proportion to our sense of His presence. Our very doubt and uncertainty are sanctified if thus we gain clearer demonstration that Christ alone can give us rest.

Our communion has left a sweet savour on my soul, for though I am not joyous now I have a cleaving to Christ—O may the invincible might of our dear Redeemer be displayed in, for, and by us, weak as we are; so that all things may work together for His glory and our establishment in grace. The warfare will soon be concluded, and if only we are found enduring hardship as good soldiers, willing to “resist even unto blood,” assuredly the glorious prospect beyond the grave will abundantly recompense us for every suffering; and even here our present peace will be of a more substantial and enduring kind. O my friend, let no discouragements move you; great are the promises which stand on your side, and many the pledges you have already received! Remember that to such as believe, all things are possible, and that the very extremities to which we may seem to be reduced are the gracious opportunities for displays of the Lord's faithfulness. 'Tis then we are taught what it is to feel, “When I am weak then

am I strong," and, putting our whole confidence in Jesus Christ, to trust Him in all our way.

Let me hear from you, I beg, as soon as you can; you ever live in my tenderest remembrance, and I hope we shall ere long meet where love is perfected, and our united tributes of praise shall eternally be rendered to the redeeming Lamb. Pray for me, and let us continue to meet in the Spirit at the feet of Jesus.

Your ever most affectionate friend,

M. S.

III.

Sickness a Sanctified Evil and Privilege to Heirs of Life—Encouraging Exhortations—Resignation of her little Flock to the Lord.

You will be surprised, my beloved friend, that so many posts should pass away and bring you no tidings from hence. You have rested upon my heart with much anxiety and tender love, and I have been very desirous for an opportunity to commune thus with you; but I have been and am very ill. My weakness is extreme, so that I am scarcely able to walk, and a violent cough with intense headache render me altogether unfit for anything but lying upon my sofa.

For anything, did I say? Oh! no, my friend, surely in such moments it is that the members of Christ are called upon to evidence the vital power they possess in their union with their head, and by His grace and energy to live above the evils of this present state.

I think sickness is one amongst the many sanctified evils of this world, and can scarcely wish to be otherwise than thus, if only our dearest Lord is pleased to

magnify Himself and mercifully to grant His right hand under my head and His left arm to embrace me. To me it is well that I have not a strong body, for thus I return to meditate more quietly upon my debt of love, and thus learn that there is a better and more enduring home on high. Pray for me, for much have I need to receive every aid which the loving-kindness of the Lord may grant.

When I wrote to you last I was under the dreariness of the clouding in of my prospects heavenwards, but now I am permitted to see beyond the grave a mansion prepared even for me. Wretched I am indeed in every particular as to myself; but what then, my friend? The wretched, the poor, the blind are welcome to His feet, yea, raised to lay in His bosom and taste in His love what this world cannot give! The very gloom which at times will hang over our way gives additional gladness to our hearts when the light breaks forth; and I think I have most frequently found that a remarkable frame of spirit, either in comfort or distress, has been the prelude to the great reverse. How infinite in wisdom is our eternal friend. For are we not by these means kept from resting in present enjoyments? The uncertainty of all our possessions here gives new life and vigour to those affections which ascend to the rest above. Oh, how delightful is it to my soul to be filled with humble hope that we shall be everlastingly united when once our Saviour comes, and that the sweet enjoyment we had when together was but a small pledge of what we shall possess when it is His will to call us away.

For my own part I never experience so much of the sensible communications of the Holy Spirit as when most desolate, both in outward tribulation and deprivation of means; and the sweetest Ebenezers which I can

look back upon are those which have been erected in the most dreary parts of the wilderness. So then we learn to bless Him, for all indeed, but most for the severe, and to count that the fiery furnace, or the lion's den, or the tempestuous seas, are situations full of the richest fruit, tending to exalt the name of Israel's God, and to manifest to us that it is indeed all of grace, and that an everlasting grace. O noble privilege made over to the chosen heirs of light ! Blessed be the Lord for His wonders of love, and for that free mercy which was pleased that we should be vessels to the praise of the glories of His grace !

I hope you are not disheartened by any seeming difficulties ; nothing is too hard for omnipotence, the rough places shall be made plain, and crooked things straight—fear not ! You had many examples whilst amongst us of the little reason we have to be dismayed by any dangers. If called to suffer, 'tis in a glorious cause ; every sigh and every tear will be numbered by your attentive keeper ; the whole family of the redeemed have come out of great tribulation, and faint not if required to fill up somewhat of the measure of Christ's sufferings in his body. In reproaches, in sufferings, in stripes, in death St. Paul could glory, and experience that when he was weak then was he strong. The same power is invested in you—carrying Christ in your breast there cannot be any situation in which He will fail you ! O my friend, I am persuaded that if we would enjoy the delights of the inward witness it must be in the way of ready faithfulness, and having your eye single, and the object of your desire simply to please your loving Saviour.

Though the consequences may be very trying to the flesh, yet let not this apprehension interfere with our purpose of walking steadily in Zion's way. But perhaps the Lord may carry you as a lamb in His bosom,

and lead you through less troubled waters. He knoweth best how to appoint our way. But, my beloved friend, let us wait to be led and taught by the Lord, and in His guidance we cannot fail to reach finally the haven of our desires.

My poor prayers are ever offered up for the richest blessings to descend upon you. I hope to have a letter soon which may revive my spirit as your last did. Do not forget me in your offerings—you know how needy I am—especially at this time, when suffering in body. I am writing to you from my bed in which I am the easiest, and therefore I lie much.

My little flock lie close to my heart;—poor things, they have been much tried, but no doubt it is good for them; they are too much disposed to rest upon me; but I hope there are many in whose hearts the love of Jesus is shed abroad. I am contented to leave them if it is the Lord's will, for He will keep His own—only may I be washed in that blood which cleanseth from all sin, and numbered with those who are plucked as brands from the burning. My time is very uncertain—perhaps I am writing my last letter to you. I hope I shall find admission among the saints. The crucified Jesus is “all my salvation,” and I wish to add, “is all my desire!”

I have, however, often been raised from the borders of the grave, and perhaps may once more. May we then learn to say with heart's truth that “to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

I write with difficulty, as I have a blister on my breast; but you will perhaps be able to read my letter, and I am unwilling to lay down my pen. I cannot however sit up longer. May the Lord Jesus bless and establish you and ever shower upon your soul His richest grace. Believe me your truly attached friend,

M. S.

IV.

Support in all States—Wanderings in Prayer—Danger of Declension—Mites of Labour.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

IT was some time before I was raised from the attack of sickness, in the midst of which I last wrote to you, and since that period I have had another confinement to my bed : this, with the pressing engagements which at all times surround me here, and also much anxiety of mind on account of my dear sister's indisposition, have combined to prevent my writing before. Indeed I have been greatly harassed by the fear that we should be obliged to leave this situation for a season to seek Eliza's restoration,—and how it will end I do not know. She is yet very poorly, and change of air necessary. I am sure I shall have your heart's sympathy in my present circumstances, and I hope your prayers will be offered in our behalf. I need not say to you that the greatest trial which I could suffer below would be a separation from the flock of Jesus: nevertheless the power of the Eternal Spirit is ever ready to be made manifest in our weakness; and whatever we may be called to endure in the appointments of the Lord, we have a sacred rest for the mind in the persuasion that all is ordered and settled by unerring wisdom, and everything shall tend to exalt the name of the Lord.

We should rather rejoice in every opportunity in which we may exercise the grace which is imparted; and I believe that all the extremities through which the believer shall pass will lay up a glorious increase to the endless praise of Jesus Christ. What, my friend, do we desire? Are we not longing after that state which

shall resolve us into the will of God, and make us sufficiently blessed if only He is exalted and His presence vouchsafed to us? O methinks no dreary desert, no gloomy prison could fail in sweet delights, were Jesus there! I remember four precious lines in one of Watts' poems, which have oft-times afforded language for the feelings which were in my heart:—

“ In midnight shades or frosty ground
I could attend the pleasing sound;
Nor should I feel December cold,
Or think the darkness long.”

The inward presence of the Spirit, inclining the heart to communion with Jesus, and applying to us the promises as interested in them, forms the richest banquet on which we can feed below; and when we enjoy this privilege, we may exclaim with the Psalmist, “ Thou hast spread me a table in the wilderness!”

I feel with you that we are miserably liable to wanderings of thought in the duty of prayer; and particularly I suffer as you do in the presenting of my flock, or of the particular circumstances of any members in it to my mind, so that often have I wandered from the subject on which I had begun to supplicate, and found myself surrounded with the objects of time. Alas! how sadly manifest does it thus become that we can do nothing but what is loathsome and defiled by our own corruptions. Let us not, however, forget that thus we obtain increase of experience, and the preciousness of the blood of sprinkling is made more known to the soul. How dear is that refuge to which we may flee in all our distress! and how unspeakably valuable that fountain, the efficacy of which extends to wash us clean from every contracted stain! May we be strengthened in faith, my dearest friend, and learn to glory in infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon us!

I have not much information that is new to give. The young woman that we called upon remains in an insensible state. Her convictions, I fear, go no further than natural conscience; and she confirms, to my judgment, the observation I have frequently made upon those who fall away from their profession. I have been allowed to see some, but *I never yet* found one *abidingly* return. God forbid that we should limit the mercy and grace of Jesus! But how awful a reflection is it that such seem to be “twice dead.” Having rejected the Saviour whom they for a time seemed to receive, they appear doubly hardened, and more than ever enslaved by sin. How powerfully does St. Paul’s exhortation just now come across my mind—“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, lest any of you be hardened by the *deceitfulness* of sin.” O who can guide in the perfect way but Christ alone! or how can we be preserved from the subtle dangers which surround us, but only by the never-wearied watchfulness and care of our Saviour and Lord! * * * * *

Soon we shall meet, I trust, where we shall possess our soul’s desires, and before the throne of our God be everlasting happy. May no discouragement and no sorrow of the way ever move us to forget the eternal weight of glory which is laid up for those that bear the Cross. O let our sluggish hearts be roused to yet more ardent desires for the promotion of Christ’s kingdom, and our little mite of labour be cast in with faith amongst the endeavours of His people;—and I entreat you, my beloved fellow pilgrim, to press onwards in the blessed calling.

I am your tenderly attached friend,

M. S.

V.

Encouragement in Spiritual Exercises, though under Depression.

I WISH, my beloved ——, I could always be sent upon a sweet message of love to you; for as Solomon saith, “As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.” Blessed news then are the ambassadors of Christ commissioned with,—glad tidings of peace in our crucified Redeemer! Wherefore are you disquieted when it is free grace and mercy that you have been brought to throw your soul upon? Who ever perished when cleaving to Christ! I would that we could rebuke the accuser with “Jesus died,” yea rather is risen again, and is mighty to rescue even from the depths of the lowest hell. Indeed, my dear love, I have had much more joy in you of late, and think that my daily observation shews you to be advancing in humility, and laying more meekly under the Cross. That your inward sense of ruin and misery should keep pace with it is not surprising, for thus doth the Lord prepare us for being filled with himself. I know it to be so; I feel that I must be nothing, and Christ must be all; and I earnestly bless Him that He leadeth you, my beloved girl, by the same steps. Let him make bare his arms, and do all His pleasure: we know that the bruised reed is under his healing care, and that there is in his precious blood a remedy for every ill! Firm and undaunted, stand fast in this confidence; meet thy great adversaries in the Almighty strength of your great Lord; and let not the apparent terrors of the Prince of darkness confuse thy mind or turn away thy eyes from the sure and certain mercies of the Prince of Peace.

He hath wrought wonders for us of late; and our

opening prospects are such as are calculated to stimulate every holy resolution, and to rouse every sleeping power. God grant us patience to embrace all His will ; and let us be sure that He who hath wrought in us a will, shall assuredly afford us the power. " Shall I bring to the birth and shut the womb," saith the Lord ; and our travailing souls shall come forth from the darksome womb of temptation and fear, and a glorious light of an eternal day shall break upon our sight !

Upon the subject of your note I will converse with you. But you know, my dear love, that the Lord never lays upon us more than he enableth us to bear.

O that our hearts and lips may be tuned to say at all times he doth all things well.

Farewell, my beloved —. Arise, thou daughter of Zion, shake thyself from the dust, and look unto Him who is thy King, and cometh unto thee meek and lowly !

God bless thee in him ; and remember that I am ever thy tender mother and friend,

M. S.

VI.

Watching for a Recollected Mind—Assurance in Christ—Patient Endeavours for Young Children.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

THE overshadowing presence of Jesus is, I trust, over you wherever situated or however exercised. If He is near, all is well ; and I hope, my beloved friend, that this exceeding privilege is granted to us both. We know that He never really withdraws His presence from us ; and therefore 'tis some fault in us when mourning under the hidings thereof.

O why is it that we can ever fall into such frames of spirit as to make us fear we have lost our Beloved, and are cast out from His sight! Alas, my friend, even with much of the measure of grace, we find it difficult to live by faith, and to cease from sense; and whilst we may perhaps retain our customary meetings with our Lord at stated times, we fall into forgetfulness of Him for a long space between these seasons, and therefore lose the lively assurance of His love. 'Tis one great part of any comfortable walking to watch for this recollected mind; and were we more apt in it, no doubt we should have much more of delight, and find a table spread in the wilderness more frequently than we do.

My beloved friend, we are not straightened in our free and willing Lord, out of whose unfathomable riches we may ever draw; and when we do not experience His Spirit in us springing up in refreshing streams, is it not because we have little faith? or unhappily have suffered something which has grieved that Spirit, and made it necessary to correct? And yet how constant is His love, bearing with every infirmity, and sanctifying the effects of even our greatest causes of abasement to our eternal interest; and so watching over us as to overrule our very falls, to raise us even to that Rock which is higher than we are, and upon which we may stand secure though surrounded on every side by the most tremendous storms! I often think that expression of the Psalmist, "Lead me to the Rock," &c. is very expressive both of our impotence and our safety, and sweetly blends in the experience of the believer's heart the sense of weakness with the assurance of protection. "Lead me," for I am blind and ignorant, and in some measure fearful; but there is a Rock, which once attained, will secure me from all evil, and support me amidst every shock. The same idea seems to be im-

plied in the Lord's address to the Church in Solomon's Song—"O my dove that hidest in the clefts of the Rock." How affecting is our place of refuge, the riven side of Jesus, the clefts made in Him by bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows! May we ever hide ourselves there, and renounce every refuge of lies which either the world or our own vain hearts might present to us; and beware of seeking in resolutions, frames and duties, that defence or rest which Christ crucified alone can give.

I think, my friend, that every day I see more clearly how simply we must receive Jesus for our ALL in all. Many of our painful trials either are directed in order to force us from self-dependance, and from that self-righteous nature which cleaves to us in one shape or other as long as we live. It seems very extraordinary, that poor and miserable as we are, we should be so slow to act as if we believed it; and that none of the thunders or terrors of Sinai can force us from underneath the law, or keep us hearkening to the precious and merciful sounds of Calvary. But pride is the root of bitterness within; and though beggars and lepers and all that is wretched, we require constant remembrances from the Lord to keep us mindful of it, and some thorn in the flesh by which we may recollect the value of the Cross.

I hope to hear that experience of Christ's faithfulness increases your confidence in Him. Here we find the mysterious union of Christ's members, that though personally unknown, they are wrapt up in the heart and thought upon in love.

You must be encouraged in your endeavours with young children. There are some amongst the little ones here of whom I have had very faint hope;—they seemed to gain so little of information, but have lately

come out with surprising increase; so it appears instructive, that what we scatter in faith may be silently drank in by the hearer, and when we least expect it may be found, though after many days. I hope therefore, my friend, that you will not faint in this pursuit on account of discouraging appearances; and when we consider to what days we are looking forward as about to break upon our world, we do not know for what purpose we are teaching a little child that, perhaps, shall be partaker of Millennial blessedness!

Farewell; may you lack no good thing, but always be satisfied with that portion which you have in Christ; and having Him, my love, you have all your soul desires, for He is “all our salvation and all our desire.”

Believe me, in truth, your most tenderly attached friend,

M. S.

VII.

To one Entangled by yielding to Creaturely Impressions—Judicious Searching and Faithful Remonstrance and Counsel.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I WAS under some apprehensions about you on receiving some information, which left an impression that all was not right. This was soon explained by what afterwards came forth as to your situation with that young lady; and your own letter to me gave me possession of the fact which had disturbed your own peace of mind. As to the impression consequent upon these, there has been nothing of prejudice, but the matter affected me seriously as particulars came before us. In all there has been a readiness to afford you every consideration

of sympathy, and every feeling of regret that by any means you should be entangled in the serious prospect of a connection which, before it is made, should have the foundation of knowledge, of character, &c. with many other serious accompaniments ; and with some *provision* before you by which, at any rate, your entrance into life might be unencumbered with pecuniary difficulties and worldly cares. It seems, however, to be brought to conclusion in this instance, and the matter to be dropped with mutual consent. It is impossible that I should be a judge of the various particulars in which the affair has been unhappily involved ; all our intelligence has been from yourself or from uncertain report ; thus far then you may find reason for relief.

But, having said thus much, allow me seriously to appeal to your own soul upon a subject wherein you have been so unhappily involved, and which I fear may prove a source of temptation and evil in your future steps. I endeavour to consider the matter in the exercise of my private judgment combined with your disposition and character ; and when my thoughts turn to this view of the affair, I confess I have my apprehension that you have gone further than you ought either from Christian or prudent motives, and that you have given way to a prevailing sin of your heart. It becomes not you or me to shut our eyes to the light, or to soften discovered truth ; and my soul is pressed with solicitude upon the point, not so much from this present circumstance, as from anxiety that you may *improve* by the experience, and learn where it is needful for you to place your double guard. It is evident that you are creaturely to excess. Now sometimes we talk of this vile propensity with feelings of complacency to the evil, and almost with subtle admiration, at least of the *sensibility* which we think is manifest herein. I know

that this is an accompaniment upon the disposition; and that, so long as such an attendant remains, the axe is not laid to the root of the tree. My great desire at present is, that you may really perceive the abomination in all its hateful and dangerous consequences. It is in itself idolatrous, and baneful to that devotional simplicity which we ought to cherish. It is also a handmaid and nurse to *vanity*; for it opens the way of admittance to the most inordinate expectations, and the most unsound estimation of our powers of attraction, influence, &c. It is deadly in its tendency upon others; for whilst it ensnares our own souls, it insinuates poison into the souls of others, and in many instances involves the peace and character of the persons so infected by the influence. With *all* persons its evil is comprehensive of the most miserable effects, but in none so much as in a *minister of the gospel*. By allowing this habit, the free intercourse of Christian fellowship oft-times becomes defiled, and what was begun in the Spirit is finished in the flesh. In some cases the cause in general, and the minister's usefulness in particular, receive a blight, and the world is prejudiced. But I might fill my sheet with a detail of the long train of present, nay of eternal miseries belonging to this indulged disposition, beheld by me now, after some years experience, with horror and alarm!

Turn then into the recesses of your heart; and when you find the enemy in this form so powerfully present there, O be not irresolute, but put forth the hand of faith, and pluck the adversary from his hold. There are persons who can apparently, but transiently, enthrone objects in their affection, and have soon discovered that nothing more than passing excitement placed them there. One object has been rapidly exchanged for another. If such is your disposition, and the evil re-

main in your own heart only, it might be *less* to be deplored, though still to be crucified; but if you *vent* the passion, and so endanger others or your own character—take heed, and adventure no further in this way: it will end in some sad fall, should you suffer its continuance; for you will be throwing yourself either into an imprudent or an unsanctified connection, and your poor soul be all the while languishing under the savor of this baneful plant.

Listen to this testimony of a friend. Be resolved, when your passions are awakened, to bring them to the bar. Know that they are hallowed by *God's allowance*, ere you give them welcome to your heart: and consider well, ere you *seem* to make overtures to another! In your present situation you are better unentangled with creatures, and free from the embarrassments of the world; and I beseech you guard against *particular* friendship with females; you seem not to be one to have them safely. When next you love, let it be where the *Lord loves*; and yield not to the emotion without some prospect of a conclusion that may be honourable to yourself, to the person, and to your God.

I have written in all the faithfulness of a friend; I hope you will receive it as springing out of the fulness of a heart that yearns for your soul's prosperity, and for your ministerial triumph in an abundance of souls given to your work in Christ.

The Lord keep and cherish you, making you a channel of sacred communication to all around.

M. S.

VIII.

Maternal Counsel on the same Subject.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

. . . . I trust you possess a testimony of peace from your *best* Friend, in which you may always rejoice, and that the smiles of a reconciled God may illumine your way. I am sure we have need of such beams in a pathway wherein so much of daily exercise is proved; and the further we travel through the wilderness so much the more shall we find *herein* alone is real support and life,—the result of all experience should be the increase of this persuasion, and the ardent simplicity which would appropriate the blessing; and I hope in you accomplishing Omnipotence of grace is known!

The late season of trial, into which you have been plunged, will, if sanctified, be essentially useful to your soul: nothing is more likely to strike at the root of evils which have a constitutional power over us, than the painful mortifications and difficulties which the yielding to such evils will always produce. Whilst I have entered into the distress with which you have been tried, I have earnestly looked for the *fruit* which might be gathered from the bitter tree.

I do not enter upon the various modifications of an occurrence into which this may be thrown, nor desire to take up the many premises upon which *excuses* might be formed; it is not for us, as the children of light, either to seek or to suffer anything which might obscure our own views of self; and therefore, although something like this might be presented in your case, it is best *rejected*, in order that the whole of wholesome dis-

cipline may be felt. How slow to learn! and what we learn, how backward to behold and mortify! But let us evermore be found urging the insincere and indolent nature into its proper service; and be vigilant to make clean the soil of the garden which we are commissioned to cultivate.

One of the greatest beauties of our supernatural life is that integrity of holy uprightness, by which it should be marked; and sweet is the grace which enables us, in this respect, to lift up clean hands. Honest and open, upright and true dealing is an ornament; and it is a rich preservation; keeping us from many fatal snares, and preserving a hidden peace which is unspeakable, and which will always yield a spring of comfort in midst even of *troubles* induced by *incaution*. But this is not what we are naturally disposed unto; for the testimony of the word and of the understanding will perpetually show us, not only that the heart is desperately wicked, but deceitful above all things. O! who can express the windings and turnings of this awful labyrinth? May God defend us from its power, and lead us out of its miserable entanglements!

How are you now situated in the late affair? I hope none are at variance. Let peace and love have a perfect work. I might add, how are you situated in the condition of your affections? I beseech you be careful; more misery and sometimes more disgrace has ensued to the Christian upon this head than upon any other; and it appears to be a favorite engine of Satan by which to assail the pilgrim; more especially, I think, by which to tempt and trouble such as bear a more conspicuous and public character in the flock of Christ.

I do therefore earnestly pray you to resist all inclinations to trifle upon this point, and to settle it in your heart and mind, no more to allow the wretched inmate,

every day shews us still more how vain every thing is, short of Christ and his fulness, to satisfy our souls. And yet, alas! my dear girl, we miserably forget too often to seek a close walk with the Lord, and by our own want of perseverance, frequently rob ourselves of much spiritual joy. O may we learn, by the Spirit's teachings, the value of converse with our God, and maintain a perpetual intercourse with heaven, so that in sorrow or in joy, our treasure may be above and our Jesus our all in all!

In your state of health, my dear B——, there seems a double necessity for this devotional spirit, and perhaps it is the Lord's will that you should be thus afflicted for the very purpose of weaning you from the world and setting your soul on the love of eternal things. We know that he does nothing in vain, and infinite wisdom governs all his ways; and I believe, my love, he has enabled you thus to receive your trial and to glorify him in it.

O my dear B——, how dreadful would have been your condition had you now been ignorant of your soul's value and known nothing of the redemption of Jesus! Let me urge you with increase of desire to seek a growing sense of the debt of love you owe, and by meditation upon the subject to feel from how tremendous a state free grace has snatched you, making you one of those who live monuments of his power. Whatever may have been our way of life previous to the call of grace, it is necessary that we should see and feel that we have been the chief of sinners, and that however the eyes of men should see nothing to complain of in us, yet that before the heart-searching God we are altogether unclean and vile; the more this is experienced, so much the more shall we be humbled, and the Lord's free grace magnified, and our comforts

also in thinking upon the undeserved love which we have received will be increased. Let this be what you diligently seek, my dear girl, in your experience, and remember that we must be growing up daily into greater discoveries both of ourselves, and of our Saviour.

Perhaps he will ere long take you home to himself; blessed will you be, my love, if he is yours, for it is far better to depart and be with him; and I hope that the prospect of dying is not terrible to you, since Christ has taken away the sting of death, and his blood and merits are what you cast your soul upon. May we meet in his bosom and give him endless praise. Farewell, my dear girl.

Believe me ever your most affectionate mother and friend in our eternal Lord.

M. S.

XI.

Leaving Home—Joyful and Blessed Apprehensions of Faith.

MY DEAREST ——,

I WAS very much affected when we parted, and the expression of your face said more than if you had spoken much. I had thought that the next time I should go out at that door my wearied soul would have passed its solemn account, and my sins and sorrows been over. I thought too of the possibility that I might see none of your faces any more; and indeed many agitating emotions filled my breast.

I found, however, sweet relief in the bosom of my precious Lord; and pouring out my soul secretly to Him, I found the journey sweet to me: for though my

body was in great pain, yet pain seemed rest whilst I felt as if in the arms of my Saviour and my God.

O how should we prize and esteem this inexpressible possession of a crucified Jesus' eternal love ! and how well may we understand what our Lord declared to his disciples, that He would manifest himself unto them as he did not unto the world !

Shall we not believe and rejoice in this glorious testimony that we are his ? Yes, assuredly we have pledges of endless life within us, and should therefore be found continually rendering up a tribute of praise for distinguishing mercy and grace. For whenever any precious affections stir in my breast, "Who made thee to differ," is a question which, according to my mind, fills me with wonder, and sets me upon meditations upon many of those mysterious decrees of Almighty God, all of which do greatly exalt the Creator, and deeply abase the creature.

I think it is one of the most admirable parts of the work of grace, to observe how the Lord carefully, whilst, with lavish bounty, He pours overwhelming blessings upon us, still with holy jealousy guards his own glory in all, and so orders his dispensations, that whilst He suffers us to lack no good thing, He makes us to feel that we have no good thing in ourselves. Oh ! my dear —, may we yield a teachable heart to these things, and be made humbly willing that Christ should be glorified in our infirmity.

I do not doubt that the Lord is with you. My prayers are offered up for you, and I trust you do not forget me. O how blessed is it to know that he will never leave nor forsake his own, and that He is always with us, though not always in apparent smiles ; yet that even in clouds and chastisements a present and a loving God is there !

Let your mind occupy itself much in this way of exalting our precious Redeemer and Lord. You will find it a blessed means of putting the enemy to flight, and will thus be empowered to take down your harp from the willow, and sing the song of Zion even in this strange land.

It is the unceasing conviction of my mind that nothing can avail us in this stormy scene but closest devotion to the Cross; and every experience makes me find more and more that if we would obtain glorious victories, and live in the privilege of faith, we must accustom our body to be kept under, and familiarize our flesh to crucifixion and self-denial. May we never forget that we have been called to conformity to the death of our Lord; and looking to the abundant rest reserved for us, may we never be weary in well-doing.

God bless and nourish you, my beloved ——.

Believe me, ever yours most affectionately,

M. S.

XII.

When Absent from Home—Ardent Love for the Flock—Longings after God.

ALTHOUGH I wrote to you, my beloved ——, this day, yet I know you will not think this letter too much, neither do I think it too much to write. I hope you are experiencing those hidden possessions with more power upon your heart, for which you desire me to pray for you. Be assured, my love, I can never forget to do it whilst I remain what I am. The covenant of endless love encloses us on every side; and we who hope to enjoy an eternity together, will hold sweet converse on the way.

I am very thankful that this is such a scene of seclusion. I seem buried from all observation, and can feel myself out of the world; whilst at the same time the world above is opened to my faith, and great and eternal things press upon my notice, and call forth all my heart. O to what glorious heights and depths of wonder are we called; and how exceedingly marvellous is the operation of that grace which raises such clods of the earth to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! I wish for nearer communion with my God and Saviour; and the more I discover, so much the more my spirit languishes for the brighter displays of redemption. I wish to have a soul absorbed in the love of Jesus, and that all my affections may rise out of and flow back unto this source of life. But alas! this will never be until I put off this clog of flesh in which I groan earnestly! O who can walk safely in such a world, except as overshadowed by a Saviour's grace? or where can repose and hope be found save in the rest prepared for the people of God? Indeed I am persuaded that it is our privilege and best inheritance to live close upon the threshold of heaven; and it is what I can never cease to be ambitious of obtaining so long as I live. O may I act with consistency with these desires, and not be the sport of a variety of miserable feelings.

I am ever in the desire to pray for my dear little flock;—all are very precious to me; and I hope in Christ that the work of grace may not perish in any of their souls. This temporary parting from them endears them the more to me; and I find, in truth, that they are the offspring of my heart's sorrow and travail. Unworthy as I am that I should ever have spoken in the name of Jesus, yet let me hope He will not disdain to keep those few sheep I have left in the wilderness, and

that He will mercifully display his prevailing power in securing all dear to me from misery and sin.

I should have written a parcel full of letters had I known the man was going, or been certain in time enough that mine had reached you; but as it is, they must wait another week. Give my affectionate love to all that you can see; and explain to them, my dear girl, the reason of my not having written more, and that I await the arrival of their packet, which I expect by return of the man that takes this.

I rejoice that we have an enlightened ministry here; it is not such an one, or perhaps I am not disposed to think it so fervent, as at Knaresborough; but the clergyman seems a simple, honest, and faithful man; he was brought up under Mr. Robinson, a very eminent servant of God, and his conversation savours of the life of faith. I like him much as a child of the Lord. He is very bashful; but perhaps he might suppose me of the same spirit as himself, as he spoke to me in coming from church, and has since called here.

You know, my love, that I prefer entire solitude as to my individual feelings; but the children of grace must always be dear to my heart. Whatever I may prove myself, I love those who are the monuments of his grace, and esteem them the excellent of the earth.

I spend much time at the sea-side,—the objects suit my state of mind; and I can read and pray there unmolested, and also have the family to read. But no occupation, however sanctified and holy, can deaden my heart to those blessings I have left behind me, or hinder my heaving the anxious and heartfelt sigh to be restored to my dear home.

The Lord bless you! Be assured that you are ever borne upon my heart with truest affection. Do not

forget to entreat for me that I may abound in Jesus' eternal love.

Believe me ever your tenderly-attached friend,

M. S.

XIII.

Sympathy—Privilege of Spiritual Sorrow joined with Hope.

My DEAREST ——,

IT is much harder to keep the heart warm towards an unseen object than towards one whom we see before us ; but Jesus Christ has an eye-salve with which he can anoint the blindest, and enable them to see ; and I believe, did we but examine the state of our soul, we should find that the very lamentations which we express upon the coldness within do prove that we love Him so much that we fain would love Him more. My beloved ——, let not your heart be troubled. The language in your little but expressive note manifests a soul brought into willingness to suffer and to do the will of God ; and I think it one of the most profitable states in which the soul can be. For my own part, I think it is far better to be continually sowing in tears, with a few intervals of comfort to keep us from despair. By this means how sweet does the hope of heaven become !—how precious the thought of being delivered from every unhallowed mixture ; and how blessed the expectation of that hour when we shall no more have need for resolutions, promises and prayers, but our whole souls shall be filled with the fulness of the Lord. You are like unto me in the experience of your soul ; and I find it all works to this blessed end of making me cry out more earnestly on one hand, “ O wretched

man"—and on the other, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus." We will look forward to that glorious period—perhaps distant from us only a few hours—or, if more, it shall surely come, and we shall be with Him whom we desire simply to love and to glorify ! I am sure it is a wholesome state for you; because whilst you are thus exercised in yourself your fruits are riper, and far more beautiful to the observation of others. God bless you, and be your abiding Comforter, and rest within you always.

Believe me your most tenderly-attached mother and friend,

M. S.

XIV.

*To a young Disciple, on the Communion—Urgent Motives to be Useful to others—
Superior Happiness of the Life of Faith.*

MY DEAR J——,

I HAVE great pleasure in beginning the correspondence upon which we have agreed, and I have confidence too that our dear Lord will not refuse to look upon this little tribute to his praise ; so that in taking up my pen to address you, my own heart is lifted up to the bosom of our faithful God, and the exercise of faith is called forth ! It is sweet indeed when intercourse is sanctified by a oneness of spirit with Christ, and I trust that *we* have this bond ; so that the increase of our Master's kingdom and interests will be the prevailing motive for the continuance of our affection towards each other. O my dear girl, what an unspeakable privilege it is that we can begin upon earth what shall be our blissful engagement in heaven ; and that although we are as yet strangers and pilgrims in this lower scene, yet we can

have our conversation in heaven, and our affections there !

I rejoice in the approaching opportunity, in which I hope we shall meet, to commemorate that dying love to which we are indebted for all these delights. At all times it is a refreshment to draw near to the throne of grace ; but perhaps we never feel it so fully as on the occasions wherein these external signs assist our faith, and present before us the affecting emblems of our Lord's crucified body. At such times we have a peculiar object upon which to fix our attention ;—our thoughts are carried back to the awful scenes in Jerusalem, which once filled the inhabitants of the city with various emotions, and wrung the hearts of the disciples with anguish,—whilst we seem to be invited once more to behold the mysterious spectacle of Jesus suspended upon the cross, and yielding himself to the temporary power of death. Our affections are often touched by such reflections, and we seem ready to join the sorrowing few who ascended with Him up the mount, and wept over the scene which in the issue was to give us joy. In the presented bread and wine, however, something more than claims upon our tears is seen ; for in such an appointment the blessed effects of Christ's passion are proclaimed, and we are bid to feast and live.

But what an awful consideration it is that so many pass by, and say in their neglect of this ordinance, " It is nothing to me." When I look upon the numbers who quit the house of God without approaching his table, I am frequently deeply affected in my mind, and have some very solemn reflections upon the miserable natural state of man. Were they invited to banquet upon *earthly* things, the table would be crowded with guests ; or, did the invitation bid to the enrichment of present days of ease, then none would turn away ; but

alas! the heart of a sinner neither apprehends nor estimates the spiritual provision that is in Christ; and pressing entreaties from Him meet with little or no attention! How tremendous is such a state! Surely we believe that not one portion of God's word shall pass away without being fulfilled; and with this belief, we must then be persuaded that the negligent breach of this dying command of our Lord will call for fearful vengeance, and every disdained opportunity of approaching His table be a sad witness against the soul in the last day.

I think it should be quite sufficient to convince us of the danger to call to mind those words of Christ, "Verily I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." It is true that many may eat the bread and wine without any participation in his flesh and blood; but the ignorant and formal observance of the ceremony does not render it less important to such as expect salvation in Christ: and when we refuse to partake of these emblems, we have reason to suspect that we are destitute of any living faith in the object they represent. In short, whenever we draw near to God in prayer, it must be by this appointed living way; and all the day long we must be feeding upon Him, if we have any life in us; so that our monthly sacrament is but the sign of what we are continually doing in spirit, if our souls have any vital union with Him. These things I believe, my beloved girl, are accepted in your heart, and I trust will there for ever abide. But you are associated with some who most probably have not the same experience with yourself; and on this account you will do well frequently to awaken your own recollections of the awful truths which accompany your present profession. The precious souls around you are *never-dying souls*;

destroyed everlasting as to all true life they must be, if Jesus is not known, for there is salvation in none other; and a *scriptural* knowledge of Him is very different from that superficial consent to His name with which thousands satisfy themselves, and by which they perish. Therefore, my dear——, your situation is one of great responsibility; and God has placed you in it, no doubt, that in some way He may glorify His name by you. We must all have a hearing time before we can be brought to know the Lord; and this time is very often in little domestic circles, where words seasoned with grace drop upon the ear of our friends, and the beautiful lustre of Christian excellency shines forth in our habitual walk. For this end possibly the Lord has appointed the bounds of your present habitation; and I hope you will affectionately persist in seeking to win souls, remembering that if one is given to you, a jewel is obtained for the crown of your Lord, and an heir of blessedness is rescued from everlasting burnings. But in all your efforts, my dear girl, never let your standard be too low. Our Bible leads us to view the most glorious heights and depths of privilege bestowed upon the children of God, and likewise directs us to press after perfection of spiritual holiness, by saying, “Be ye holy as *God* is holy.” It is very injurious to the cause and to the soul’s comfort when we lower this appointment by any carnal mixtures, or fleshly considerations; and the more decided, faithful, and devoted we are, so much the more honour do we bring to our Lord; and I am sure we can say, so much the more peace do we possess in our hearts. Neither let the enemy discourage you by apparent small success; our patience is to be tried before we reap the fruit of any gracious work; and since all efficacy to our endeavours is from God, and the meanest instruments are sometimes chosen

to effect his sovereign will, we have therefore no just ground for despondency upon this subject, but should rather remember that He has said, "*Sow beside all waters.*" May Jesus own you, my dear girl, in all your way, and give you some sweet companions who will be content to go with you in the narrow path, and bear our Saviour's cross! O shew them that the service of Jesus is a service of liberty, where precious freedom from sin and Satan rejoice the heart—where comforts pure and lasting flow in upon the soul, and where prospects bright and glowing increase in clearness the farther we advance on our course. The natural mind has a very erroneous judgment of the life of faith; it is thought gloomy and dismal, and looked upon as the end of all enjoyment;—this is a prejudice induced by sin, cherished by Satan, and increased by ignorance. When we make trial of his requirements, we find them pleasantness and peace; and innumerable are the situations in which we may decidedly prove that in following Jesus we find the full truth of what He said, "My peace I give unto you—not as the world giveth give I unto you—let not your hearts be troubled." And O what shall we say when we add to all this, that our joys are not confined to this life; the hour of death shall witness to the honourable state of a believer, and the tremendous scene of judgment silence all other joys but what are found in Him. Farewell, my dearest —, in spirit I am still with you; hoping that we shall ever rejoice together in our King, and after we have finished our pilgrimage below, rest together in the bosom of Jesus and in the company of the blessed above.

Believe me your ever-affectionate friend and mother
in our dear Lord,

M. S.

XV.

Mediation between Two Young People on breaking off a Mutual Engagement.

MY DEAR ——,

I AM quite concerned that no opportunity offers for any personal communication between us ; and I fear that some time may elapse ere you are at Knaresborough on the Monday. I have been very desirous to see you on many accounts. Our last interview was of a very interesting nature, and the subject of our converse at that time has not left my mind. With truest sympathy I have borne in mind the remembrance of your anxious state of heart, and on this account, as well as for the communion of the Spirit, I have much wished to see you. I have therefore resolved to adopt this method of conveying to you what may be information which you continue to desire.

According to your wish I sought an interview with ——, and found her as ready to enter into the subject as I was to propose it. She expressed her having long hoped that an opportunity might present itself of speaking to me on the state of her mind, and with much candour and openness she stated the whole of her heart's feelings. It appears that she has been conscious some time of a want of that peculiar affection which she knows to be requisite in order to true happiness in such a sacred engagement. Under this persuasion she has many times resolved to speak freely to you, believing that your mind would readily enter into the propriety of hesitating in the fulfilment of such serious vows, without there was indeed the upright witness of the whole consent of the heart ; but from this she was constantly held back from mistaken fear of wounding your

feelings, and from a mixture of self-condemnation for having carried the matter so far without a determinate knowledge of the state of her mind. By this conduct, as she says, she increased her difficulties and your uneasiness. This, however, was not her intention; for she has always felt for you an unfeigned regard, and still declares that as a christian and as a friend she shall always respect you. Upon this ground she was much hurt at the style of your last note, and likewise that you should have been capable of meeting without interchanging any word; for if it were possible, she would have desired that the connection might have ceased with christian sentiment, and without the allowance on either part of any resentful feelings. She is sorry that she has been the occasion of trouble to you, but sees the necessity, for both your sakes, that she should sooner have informed you of the true state of her mind.

In your note you tell her that the letters she has written to you are ready upon her demand to be returned: this she wishes to be done, and desired me to say, that if you would give them in a packet to me she would give me yours for the purpose of being burnt, as better destroyed under present circumstances. I told her I should say all this to you if I had opportunity, and that I thought you would be as willing to confide the matter to me as she herself was. And now, my dear —, I have faithfully related to you the result of that conference which you once greatly wished me to seek. I know not what may be the present state of your mind upon this subject. I would hope that the indwelling Comforter has bound up your wounded spirit, and that you possess a degree of peace which only can be found in Him. As the spiritual parent of each of you, my dear children, I do wish to see the harmony of Christian friendship maintained,

and should rejoice in knowing that it could be done consistently with the feelings of you both. But at any rate, I do hope the tender mercy of our God will be richly communicated in the sanctification of the trial to your soul, and the increase of holy delight in that love of Jesus which knows no end, and which rises upon us in value the more we experience of the disappointment which results from all earthly hopes.

I think, my dear ——, that you have been peculiarly tried in many ways, and the surrounding afflictions which have marked your steps hitherto have been of a peculiarly distressing nature ; but by these pains the joys of the Cross are increased ; and never do we so unfeignedly drink into fellowship with Christ as when human dependencies are withdrawn, and we are made to feel that everything but Christ must be and is fluctuating and unsatisfactory. How frequently does our dear Lord blight our earthly gourds, that we may rest under *His* shadow with new delight ! and how often do we afterwards discover how necessary that discipline has been by which we are able to say, “ My soul is even as a weaned child ! ” O may you bring all your burdens to the foot of the Cross, and learn by the contemplation of Jesus to hush your sorrows into peace, and to recline upon everlasting love. In the arms of Jesus must be consolation, and unto those arms every sojourner in Zion is privileged to flee. In the employment of your hours in prayer and reading you will find gradual increasing strength ; and in the sweet occupation of pouring information into the understanding of those few sheep in your wilderness, which you have gathered together, you will find a clear and delightful refreshment which will many times arrest the painful sigh, and lead forth your thoughts from created pains and griefs to the reliance and quiet of a believer’s heart.

In a very little while all these pressures will be removed for ever, and the fulness of Jesus' presence cause us to forget every trouble of the way. May we, my dear —, keep this in mind, and ever be looking to the inheritance which shall finish our course !

I shall be glad to receive a few lines from you, as you cannot have time to call ; and trust you will believe that my prayers are ever with you.

I am, &c.

XVI.

Causes of Diffidence—Method of Overcoming—Mourning and Watchful Soul—Inconsistent Connexions.

For my dear Daughter in the Lord.

MY BELOVED —,

My long-delayed letter will not, I hope, be the less welcome, knowing as you do that the delay on my part does not proceed from any lack of affection towards you, whom I have always loved with very tender interest in my heart ; desirous to see you eminent in every christian grace, and beautiful in the temple of Jesus' building, manifestly bearing upon your whole profession his new name deeply graven. We may have cause, my dear daughter, to bless our gracious Lord through all eternity, for having brought us together in our earthly pilgrimage. But one thing we have to regret, that Satan takes advantage of something in us which prevents our frequent communication, and often, when we do meet together, robs us of part of the benefit, by exciting a diffidence which should not subsist between us. Ah ! I believe we little apprehend the power

and subtlety of our inveterate enemy, who, creeping into the heart by imperceptible advances, too often robs us of our comforts, and though he cannot destroy one whom the Lord has adopted in his eternal counsels, yet does he retard us in our progress towards our christian pattern ; and that not always by temptations to open sin, but by troubling the mind at those seasons when we might receive benefit, and harassing the soul with apprehensions and doubts, whilst we ought to be rejoicing in the faithfulness and truth of our great Redeemer. Of this nature I think your conflicts are—and judging by my own experience, I think they are best overcome by a rejection of the first thought which leads to a suspicion of the love of our Lord, and directing our great concern to the more substantial evidences of our state. Many of God's dearest children we know pass through life under cloudy seasons, going mourning on their way, for want of the more cheering beams of his countenance, whilst others experience glad seasons, but are presently overcast. This is your case, my love, and one that is very profitable ; can we not subscribe to the truth of the declaration—"Blessed are they that sow in tears ?" And what though we reap not our joy until the kingdom of our dear Lord come ; even in this case we should be so much the more conformed to him ; and therefore here is cause for thanksgiving ! One thing however we can reap even in this life ; an increase in christian graces, for a mourning soul always is, or ought to be a *watchful* soul. An anxiety after the consolation which the Spirit affords, will beget in us a proportionate anxiety, lest we grieve the Comforter, and thus we shall find our hearts enlarged in charity, in humility, in patience and in godly sorrow.

I think we may generally observe this to be the case ;

though, at the same time, my beloved, let us watch that our mourning comes not from unbelief; for in this case, far from having a gracious effect, it sours the temper, provokes to impatience, murmuring and rebellion, and gives Satan an occasion to triumph, at least for a season. May we endeavour to unite in the purposes of God to bruise his head, and direct our whole aim both towards others and within ourselves, to search him out of every stronghold, wherein he retreats in our souls; and, whatsoever it costs the flesh, may we resolutely aim to crucify it and keep under our body; knowing, as every disciple does, how great and sore an enemy it is to the blessed life of faith, and how important those consequences are which hang upon our profession of the faith,—every way important indeed, both in this life and the eternal one to which we hasten! Many who hold to the head yet live so carelessly that God is little glorified by them, and being saved so as by fire, they know little of the glorious privileges of the children of God, and make small advance in the heavenly life. Let it be your part, my beloved daughter, to aim at higher things; the love of God is not straightened towards us, but we are straightened in ourselves. May God enlarge our desire of attaining and our capacity for receiving, that the same Spirit which was in Jesus may be in us; so that we may abound in all holiness, and carry this spirit into every purpose and practice of our lives! Thus whilst going on our way in the exercise of self-denial, we may lay up a blessed evidence of the Lord's love towards us, by his grace working in us.

As to the matter of —'s letter, you have my opinion already. I think it quite inconsistent in one of whom the Lord will say "I am married to you," to engage in a connexion with any one who is not inter-

ested in the covenant of grace. I believe your sentiments to agree with mine on this subject, and therefore I need say no more, for surely it must be a serious call, evidently from God, which could make us quit the means of grace which have been blessed to our souls' life. Whithersoever the Lord directs your steps, I trust you will go on your way leaning upon your beloved.

Let us seek in simplicity of faith, and with a loving and obedient heart, to walk by his side and love to trace his steps ; this way will lead to God, and in him to the fulness of all which can satisfy our souls. May we, along with all our Master's dear fold, speedily see him face to face, and experience the completion of our redemption both of soul and body !—and in the meanwhile, my beloved daughter, we will go forth in the strength of our Lord God, and enter into the army over which Christ Jesus is our great and powerful Captain, resisting unto death, striving against sin, and seeking every day to have the evidence of some corruption slain or grace enlarged.

The Lord comfort and keep you in his bosom, and impart to you, now and ever, every gracious supply, and keep you at all times by his unwearied grace ?

Believe me ever your most affectionate mother in our dear Lord,

M. S.

XVII.

Waiting Patiently the Issue of Trial—Two great Considerations—Desires for Practical Effects—Temper and Desires to be Chief in Estimation.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I VERY gladly devote the present hour to greeting you with a few lines from this land of mercy and of trial, where the pillar and cloud have so perpetually been exhibited in the glory of the covenant. I sit down and meditate upon the way in which the Lord has been dispensing his will to us, until my soul is ready to overflow with wonder, awe and love. But, blessed be his name, these overflowings empty themselves into the bosom of infinite mercy, and however overpowering they be to nature, sweet relief and divine sufficiency are ever near. In my heart, my dear friend, there has been, ever since the beginning of late trials, an inclination to sit still and contemplate the scene through which we have been ordained to pass; and a firm belief has prevailed also that God has a voice in which, through this exercise, he means to speak to us all. My great anxiety is not for the removal of the trial, but for the grace to hear and accept what he shall speak. As to myself, I am satisfied that I acted according to the requirement of the time. And as to any thing future which remains to me, I am quite content to meet the coming lot. It is not for us to sit down and choose for ourselves, whether we will work or rest, rejoice or suffer, live or die; we are reposing in *everlasting counsels*, and therefore have to leave the decision respecting ourselves to infinite wisdom and love. My own opinion would be that I shall speedily go home to the presence of my dear Lord; my state of health and my state of mind would indicate

this; but it is not for us to say how things future will be arranged for us, it is enough if to live is Christ and to die is gain. O my dear friend, let this be the single object we pursue, and all things that are transitory and earthly be to us comparatively dross and dung. I am glad to have resumed something of my former work, it seems to bring together some precious sheep of the fold that might otherwise seldom meet; and this is a period in the world when we are called to peculiar efforts for the strengthening of those peculiar bonds which we own. We can have very little hesitation in affirming that our Lord and King is making rapid advances towards his second advent, and knowing as we do that this eventful scene will be attended with great sifting times, it becomes us to know, and feel, and own what and whose we are. I earnestly wish to live under the constant influence of two great considerations which, I think, should be inseparable in our minds; one is, the certainty that Jesus "will thoroughly purge his floor;" the other, that "not one grain of the true wheat shall fall to the ground." These recollections would serve, by the Spirit's blessing, to make us combine in our experience *watchfulness* and *peace*. And, O how entirely empty are all the considerations which arise out of any thing short of this assured communion with our soul's beloved.

I have been very desirous to see or hear of the sanctified effect of the shock we have lately felt; as to the public opinion or feeling we have little to do with its character, excepting as we pray for the general good; but to the Lord's own family, called into fellowship here, where this touchstone has been applied, we are bound to desire a special manifestation of purifying grace. May we each be busied in the inspection of our own heart, and give to our great Refiner that glory

which is his in proportion to the degree in which his dispensations separate the precious from the vile.

Towards your soul, my beloved friend, I pray that effectual and ripening influences may be perpetually extended by this as by all demonstrations of the Lord's ways of dealing to his people. It is not that I by any means magnify the nature of my work or appointment, so as to put it into a pre-eminent station ; neither do I feel or write as if because my labours were interrupted, *therefore* the cause must suffer. O no ! I have learnt to estimate things by a standard which will not admit of such reasoning, for well we know that Jesus will carry on his cause in victory through all circumstances ; and that the commission to work or not is according to his own purpose, both in the time and instruments of his choosing. Notwithstanding this, however, there has been a developement of human nature which should not pass unimproved by us, and a revelation of the nature of christian principle, which is important and instructive. It appears to me that the great lesson to be gathered is this, that we cease from expectations, excepting as they are built upon our faithful Lord, and that we increase in the discipline of our own affections, lest they lead us to fret against the divine appointments. In your heart, my friend, this I know will be acknowledged as altogether desirable ; you have felt by painful experience that without this vigilance, spiritual comfort is exposed to every destructive storm occasioned by the mortification of natural wishes ; and never can it be otherwise, so long as we sigh after what the creature can impart. Ah, my friend, hereby the heart is kept under the sensation of perpetual wounds and blows, and of course the temper and spirit become irritated and distressed. I cannot but be solicitous that this source of trial may be dried up in your breast, and that

whatever it may cost you in attaining, you may triumphantly take captive all these suggestions, which arise from inordinate desire to be *chief in estimation*.

I will not say to you, forgive me for saying this; I know you will love me the more in proportion to the *soundness* of affection which I may evince towards you, and as I constantly feel now as if addressing those I love from my death-bed, and as if winding up all my concerns in this life, of course I am constrained to open my heart to you in this spirit. I think, from my knowledge of you, which is intimate and affectionately observant, I discover that this is the source of many a trouble to your soul; and, O my friend, I would therefore say, mind not these things, let others smile or not, you have a portion sufficient to fill your heart if Jesus smiles; and a holy charity will render you content, even if deprived of your own gratification, so long as others are blest or gratified. It is an unspeakable mercy, when we are enabled to discover where we are most liable to be assailed by the enemy of our peace. Alas! in how many ways he makes attempts which leave us under some kind of suffering; but ere long he shall be bruised under our feet, and indwelling sin shall trouble us no more; shall we not say, *even so*, let it be quickly, Lord!

I hope you will not prolong your visit beyond what is really necessary, it seems a pity to be parted when our time is so short, and I shall gladly hail your return. In the meantime, my dear friend, do not let us fail to pray and draw close to the bosom of our own eternal Lord, in whose presence with us we have a sure defence. And now, my dear friend, farewell for a little while; we shall soon meet face to face. In Jesus' love believe me, yours in the true bonds of Christ,

M. S.

XVIII.

Schools—Nourishment for Soul—Sight of the Depths of Sin—Vanity of Earthly Things—First Love—Singing.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

MANY things have occurred since I last wrote, and so much additional engagement, that I have been completely worn out with fatigue and labour. This I know is sufficient, to tell you the reason for my silence, and to satisfy your mind, seeing we each of us have but to be spent for our dearest Master, and find our sweetest, and I hope most habitual, desires to be used in such a way as shall be best in His sight. Perhaps —— would tell you that we have been establishing a school for one hundred girls, upon something of Dr. Bell's system ; teaching them reading, work, writing, and arithmetic. It has been a great undertaking, in our state of health, and required incessant attention ; but I hope we have now accomplished it, and that the blessing of our Lord will rest upon it.

Our object is to instruct the children who have been neglected, or have not had the power of obtaining any information ; and therefore we prefer girls older than are generally sent to school. I hope they will not only be advanced in outward things, but that an influence may thus be obtained over their more precious souls ! The particulars of our method of conducting it I need not fill my paper with. I know your heart of charity will rejoice that we have been strengthened to finish the plan.

Upon our return from this place (sea-side) we are to have a similar night school for boys, receiving the same number ; and I beg your prayers, my beloved friend,

that the ever faithful Saviour of our souls may still extend to us His accustomed blessing, and perfect his strength in our weakness.

Our hearts cannot but be much affected by the momentous times in which we live, and the prospect of the accomplishment of our Saviour's glory, when the knowledge of Him shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas. O may a full outpouring of the Spirit be granted upon the earth, and the heavens drop down righteousness! Surely the more we know and understand of the kingdom of Jesus, and all its free and sufficient privileges, so much the more shall we desire that all wretched sinners might embrace the heavenly truth, and find its healing and enduring consolations. Nothing, my friend, short of this treasure can be esteemed satisfactory, or be found consistent nourishment to the immortal soul—and to feed on Jesus, and eat and live by Him, is the very provision which we feel to be suitable to our renewed hearts. Blessed be our God that He has dispensed to us in some measure appetites which hunger and thirst for much more of these provisions, and that we would realize as our best portion, the indwelling presence of our Beloved—is not this the treasure which you would have both to constitute your world here and your heaven hereafter? O yes, I know that our hearts beat responsively upon this interesting theme, and that we have but one heart and mind in these views. To be dissolved and to be with Christ is by far the most delightful prospect; and in proportion as we feel this, we shall find our happiness in living by faith whilst on this side our heavenly home, and keeping close to the side of Him whom to lose sight of is grief and desolation indeed!

I have been passing through an extremely varied experience lately, having much painful insight into the hor-

rible depths which are found in the natural heart, and I think understanding increasingly the truth of that scripture which declares the heart to be "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Such knowledge cannot but be attended with many a convulsive pang and much anguish of spirit. But, blessed be God, they are dying pangs; and every such conflict will but prove to the true believer a reducing of the strength of the old man, and a reviving of the energies of the new! How precious is the blood of sprinkling made to such feelings, and how inestimably dear the wounds of that sacred body which was pierced and broken for us!

O how anxious does it make us to read our unworthy names engraven upon His heart, and to feel in sweet appropriation that Jesus died for us. Well is it then if we are led through the most dreary desert, if only we may thereby cling to the bosom of our Lord more devotedly; and the more intimate we become in this living communion with Him, so much the more insignificant and perishing will all lesser good appear.

What is it which the world can yield?—a miserable mockery of our desires, and delusive shadows, which do but leave us more desolate than they found us! What is there in creatures but danger, distress, and broken cisterns which can hold no water? O may our God turn us away from all these things, and so centre our hearts in Him that He may be our all in all! Then shall our peace flow as the river, and our short remainder of pilgrimage be richly cheered by some fore-tastes of a world where all will be God himself, and no vile mixture spoil the bright glory and blessedness which we enjoy!

How is it with you, my beloved friend? I am very solicitous that your first love should be maintained; and sometimes I feel a degree of painful solicitude for you,

as knowing how often it happens that our sensible comforts seem to languish and die, and that when we lose these, having counted too much upon them, we are brought into temptation, and are ready really to decline in faith and hope. Indeed no frame of mind is without its peculiar temptation, and we have need to be on our guard in every situation, lest, ere we are aware, Satan should suggest some of his poisonous principles, and prevail to draw us into his snare. But what I have found hitherto makes me think that there is no danger more subtle and imminent than what arises from desponding feelings, and doubts of the love of Christ. Hereby we bring our spirits into a slavery and bondage very detrimental, and are ready to harbour hard thoughts of God, and so to be led into no small similarity with the unprofitable servant who hid his lord's money and reproached him with oppression—far be it from us! O may we never lose sight of the compassions we have received, or forget the hole of the pit from whence we were digged. Mercy and truth have been with us in their most free and glorious display, and require, as it is due, that we should offer up perpetual praise, and call upon all that is within us to bless his holy name!

I have not room to tell you all our new employment; but I would mention, as what I have found very attractive both to the young people and others, the instructing in singing. I began by selecting the best voices, and training them to sing in the Sunday evening lectures; and nothing could be more affecting than their sweet simple voices, raised in the praise and name of Jesus. A request was made that they should become the *day-singers* also, and it has given much more spirit and life to this part of our worship. Perhaps you may adopt some such plan. It is useful with young minds to stimulate them by some fresh and increasing occupa-

tions, and I think one great means of keeping them vigorous is their meeting together.

We are at this place (sea-side) for a fortnight, on account of my dear sister's health—it was thought the air might benefit her—and she could not come without me. The path of duty makes all things welcome, otherwise I never like to leave my little flock. Farewell, my beloved friend. May we always be ready and waiting for his arms, who is the end of all our hopes.

Believe me ever your most affectionate,

M. S.

XIX.

Blessings of Spiritual Labour—Confidence in Christ—Suitable Supply—Merciful Association.

I HAVE looked forward, my beloved friend, with much and affectionate desire for an hour in which I might commune with you. A little remnant of time presents itself, and I seize it—for in truth, much as you rest upon my heart, I have very few opportunities to tell you so—our intercourse, however, will I trust be enlarged and eternal ere long, and in the fruition of our Jesus we shall be satisfied indeed. O how sweet, how rich the prospect; sufficient to cheer us in every tribulation, and animate us to put forth every feeble effort to which we may be enabled in the advance of our blessed Redeemer's interests!

How precious is it, my friend, that His interests are ours, and that He has united us to himself in one indissoluble and endearing bond. May we be more and more established in the hope which thus urges to

the bearing of the Cross, and to be spent in that service which marks us fellow-labourers with God himself. Supposing that but one mite is remembered and blessed by Him, O how shall we hereafter rejoice that any have been brought near to Him by such unworthy vessels ! May He cause your heart to glow with sacred transports of heavenly and substantial joy in Him, and amidst all you have to encounter lead you up to Him in faith and love ! Assuredly we want nothing else to satisfy us in every situation but the persuasion of His faithfulness as given to us for our portion. May you ever bear witness of His name, and perseveringly be found walking in simplicity of faith. He cannot ever be forgetful of His own redeemed ; and it is one of the most subtle and dangerous devices of Satan when fearfulness and distrust are sown into our hearts.

I find in my own case that nothing proves such a means of quickening me both in labour for others, and also for my own increase, as a settled confidence in Christ. This gives animation to every duty and energy to every affection, whilst outward disappointments and trials are joyfully endured, so long as the remembrance of God's eternal purpose to perform all his own will is impressed upon our souls ; on the contrary, how lifeless and how devoid of praise and gratitude is that service which we offer when gloomy apprehensions oppress the spirit, and disquieting terrors tear us from our rest in Christ !

Our hope, my beloved friend, should be as an anchor of the soul, *sure and stedfast* ; and when it has entered into that which is within the veil, no tempests, no hurricanes, no howling winds shall alarm or destroy us. O how safely shall we outride every storm whilst Jesus abides in the vessel with us—and, Peace be still, be proved by us the effectual voice of our beloved,

hushing the most furious tempests either within or without!

O well we know, my dear fellow-sufferer, how much we need this presence of His power and grace; for who can describe to what strange extremities the soul can seem to be driven? or how vain the help of any finite arms would prove in our times of need? Blessed be God for the sufficient provision which He has given to us, and that we possess in our Saviour a suitable supply for every possible necessity of the way.

When we look forward to the perils of the wilderness, we may well exclaim with the saint of old, "If thou go not with us, carry us not up hence." But he hath engaged that He will stay with us, even to merciful association in the furnace and in the waters, so that they shall not come near to hurt *us*; and if he never leave nor forsake us, say, my friend, is there any path that we can dread to tread in? or any difficulties too great for us to bear? Lean upon Him—give Him your unbounded confidence—He well deserves the trust! And ever bear in mind that for His own mercy He first loved you, and set his love upon you. He cannot cease to love. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" is the affectionate revelation of the Father's heart of mercy, yearning over his beloved son; and we are encouraged in various innumerable instances to believe that this revelation belongs unto us.

I hope I am not urging you beyond your strength; for the feebler the child is, so much the more it should (and it delights also to do it)—so much the more should it cling to that bosom where it is nourished and fed. Our weakness then shall make us seek an arm to lean upon, and his strength shall be perfected in us. Our infirmity shall make us look out for one who *has* no such thing, and in our Redeemer we shall find the

beauty of holiness, in which we also shall be beautiful, and in a willingness of grace, in our very infirmities to glorify himself! Though separate, I trust we meet in the sweet covenant of the Spirit.

Our flock are very much blessed and favoured, and a people growing up in the Lord, I trust. It is very affecting to behold the constant compassions of Christ so manifested unto this people. O may it be continued evermore!

Farewell;—pray for me, and write me when you can, believing me ever your faithfully-attached,

M. S.

XX.

Upholding Love—Commentators—Unsound Views—Snares of Society—Flock.

I THINK, my beloved friend, I may have an hour afforded me, and I seize it with affectionate desire to hold communion with you. It is one of the most astonishing parts of our dear Redeemer's love that He should so perseveringly bless and uphold his people in the midst of weakness, unprofitableness, and miserable wanderings: everything which points out this part of his compassions becomes very increasingly precious and supporting. Surely, my friend, we may say that all His ways are mercy and truth, and that every attribute of our glorious Lord combines to bless and keep his little flock. O how amazing and marvellous is that grace which has exalted us to this uniting fellowship with Him, and raised us to the highest heavens in which we are already “made to sit” with Christ Jesus.

That is a sweet scripture to reflect upon, “Kept by the power of God unto salvation.” And I think we

understand it more and more as we journey on the way, and as we find how every tear is noticed by our God, and every interest made precious in his sight! But for such truths I often think what a dreary path this world would prove, and how cast down and mournful our spirit would become. The miserable world presents scenes of wretchedness and snares of Satan, and the heart's own bitterness continually springing up to trouble us. But that Christ is *faithful* puts new courage into the weakest heart, and pointing to those everlasting regions where all present trials will cease, we are enabled to count it all joy even when we fall "into divers temptations." The truth is, my dearest friend, that this is the great object of the Lord's dealing with us, that we should be brought into simple confidence with Him, and make use of every experience and every dispensation for this blessed end. The apostle, no doubt, was attaining to this when he determined to know nothing else but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And to this he directs us all when he says that we receive "the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in Him who raised up Jesus from the dead." Almighty and Invincible Power must be found to raise us dead sinners from the polluting and destroying grave of sin; and the glory of the work from first to last is thus secured to himself; seeing we never can put forth any true energies of life until He speaks the appropriating word, and says, "Come forth!" O how would Satan be driven back confounded to his own hell did the saints of Jesus consider this purpose in all the assaults that are suffered! and could but the terrified lamb fly to the bosom of the loving shepherd in all these fearful seasons, how sweet and sure a refuge would be found!

In all your conflicts, my beloved friend, may you

realize this place of rest; and entering into the “riven side” of Jesus, find in His bleeding heart peace and joy, and increased reliance on Him!

You ask my opinion upon two points—the first respecting the use of Commentators? I think they have their use; but perhaps in some instances serve to the indulgence of sloth in the reader, who may content himself thus without searching the Scriptures for himself. I have found them of much use, however, by consulting them as I would the author, if personally acquainted, and seeking to benefit by this kind of communion; for supposing him pious and upright, I have reason to believe he may have sought and received the Spirit’s teaching whilst studying the word, and that therefore his observations may be useful to me, especially if they put me upon more diligent inquiry, or suggest hints upon which I may profitably meditate. Therefore to lean upon them wholly I think is very injurious, but to reject them wholly savours of pride.

I am not surprised at the views you mention as embraced by —, and I rejoice that he adorns his profession. But indeed, my beloved friend, I should be very sorry were you to imbibe them. They are from your account the same as —; and if you are acquainted with that author, or the opinions of his sect, you will not be ignorant of the many evils they are productive of. I know they charge us with darkness, and also stigmatize us with the name of “Workers;” seeming to suppose that because we lay so much stress upon works, that therefore we count them something meritorious in salvation. Their worship chiefly consists of praise and adoration, seldom if ever of prayer; indeed holding the perfection of grace whilst in this world, and the ceasing of conflict here, there of course ceases to be any necessity for supplication. Your own

heart, I trust, has been so taught by the Spirit as to know that this is not your case, and that there exists within you a corrupt and soul-ensnaring principle.

As to his interpretation of that passage in Romans. It is the forced one to which all of that opinion are obliged to have recourse, because it so directly strikes at the root of such sentiments. It appears evident that St. Paul spoke of himself *as possessing* the principle of grace. Would — assert that the *natural* man has a mind within him with which he receives the *law of God*? will he say that, without grace, to *will is present with him*? or can he say whilst an unchanged man, “ I delight in the law of God after the inner man ?” Far be it from us thus to contradict both experience and the written word, by which we surely learn that we are *dead* in trespasses and sins, and that we are at enmity with God, and desperately wicked. That Paul was sold under sin in nature he mournfully felt, and that he had any longings after a better liberty he ascribed to grace ; neither would he have made such an excuse for himself in his unchanged enmity to God’s law as to say, “ So then it is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me.” It is, I think, very evident that he described the severity of the conflict which he endured ; and as evident, that without the Spirit there can be no such conflict. But, my beloved friend, does this doctrine rest upon one solitary passage in the written word ? Does not this very same Paul declare that he keeps under his body, lest he should be a castaway ? Not that he doubted the eternal grace of his Lord, but that he felt he had within him a body of death which must die daily, and be mortified. The passages are innumerable to this point: and the experience of scripture saints, with all their infirmities and exclamations left upon record, are decisive and in complete harmony. It is true, the

regenerating principle is perfect when first given, but it gradually unfolds itself as the seed in the earth. It is true we are temples of the Holy Ghost, and that Christ and Belial cannot dwell together; therefore the warfare is severe and real, and Christ will gradually scatter his enemies, and cast out every power of the enemy and power of darkness. Blessed be God that we are complete in Him. But how? in imputed perfection, which indeed we have a solid title to, as soon as justified, but which we do not enjoy in full comfort on this side the grave, being exposed to much change of feeling and frame, and appointed, for many wise and gracious reasons, to run as in a race, to wrestle as for the prize, to watch lest any take our crown, and to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts!

I hope I am settled on this point, and that I see how much the Lord has thus provided for the increase of humility and of faith, daily experience keeping us abased in our unworthiness, and daily compassions, which endear the name of Jesus, magnifying the merit of His blood, and leading to a walk of holy circumspection and watchfulness!

What comfort, too, is thus opened to the weary and heavy-laden, and what sweet motives for hope to rest upon, seeing that He bears with his erring people, and continually glorifies His own strength in our weaknesses.

Though I agree with you that snares abound where the society of the professedly religious may be had, one reason may be that religion is sometimes embraced where it is become fashionable--a temptation very prevailing in the present day; and much we may lament also that even with the little flock there is too much conformity with the world, and too little of heavenly communion! May we watch and be stedfast; and

remembering the subtle dangers which surround us, make use of this knowledge as an excitement to renewed diligence day by day. You have had every reason for confidence and joy in God; and the same mercies which have prepared your way before you hitherto, will no doubt crown you at last, more than conqueror through Him that hath loved you.

Our vineyard continues to present us with much ground for labour, and many interesting scenes. Whilst many sleep in Jesus, many die in their sins, and many begin to breathe after Zion and to find the spiritual life. I trust your prayers are with us, as ours are ever yours, and that we blend our interests by pouring them forth into the bosom of our God, and that we shall finally meet in the presence and fulness of Jesus Christ!

In Him I am ever affectionately yours,

M. S.

XXI.

*Motives of Consolation—Unwavering Mind—Benefit of witnessing dying scenes
—Ministering Spirits.*

MY EVER DEAR FRIEND,

ONCE more it seems the will of my dear Lord to send me back from the confines of eternity, and that I should have a renewed prospect of a scene of labour and conflict ere my rest is revealed. I have experienced a great change in my strength in the last few days, and I anxiously fulfil the wish which has long been upon my heart, of holding sweet converse with you, my beloved friend.

With the most heart-felt interest did I read the affecting account you sent me of the departure of our

sainted sister. And whilst I would sympathize in the distress of nature which undoubtedly must be felt, under the severing stroke which divides for a season those so intimately dear from our present intercourse, yet, my beloved friend, have I not cause rather to rejoice with your spirit in that the Lord has been pleased so richly to dispense to you, not only individual blessing, but the consolation of beholding in one so near to your heart the power of divine grace and the triumphs of faith in a crucified Lord. O who that understands in the smallest measure the blissful exchange experienced by the released spirit of a redeemed one, but would join with the glorious assembly above, and unspeakably rejoice in the gathering home of such a vessel to unchanging bliss! It is the weakness of our faith, my friend, and our unworthy thoughts of the realms of light, which occasion so much regret as we too often feel on such occasions; for, as our Saviour saith, “If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go to the Father.” To be freed from all the miseries of this vale of tears, and delivered for ever from the ensnaring and defiling power of sin, is enough to transport the soul with holy longings to be dissolved; but when it is not only an absence from all possible evil, but a fruition of all the unspeakable good which is reserved for the faithful, surely we may agree from a double prevailing motive with St. Paul, and say, “It is *far, FAR*, better to depart and be with Christ.” Is it not the end to which our own panting souls are ever aspiring, and the completion of the joy which Jesus has in this travail of his soul! Why then do we not rise beyond the pressure of natural and selfish feeling, and, soaring by faith with the departed spirit, give praise unto our God, that one more soul is safely landed and gathered into the fold of everlasting security and joy!

To you I know these reflections will have become very familiar and dear. They yield a consolation under the dispensations which exercise us, which are peculiar to the saints, and which are known only to those who have the Spirit of the Lord. In these things it is that the Christian understands the secret of the Lord, and finds a refuge and rest amidst the convulsions of nature and the storms of this lower world. Let us endeavour, my friend, to attain to a weaned heart from all that belongs to our passage through this life; for when we know how to be abased and how to abound, then we are anchored in every tempest, and need fear none of those things which shall come upon us.

I think it should be a Christian's ambition to possess an equal and unwavering mind. We know in whom we have believed, and surely 'tis our privilege to abide in the confidence of faith and the affiance of a child. A habit of serious reflection upon the eternal world will very much assimilate the soul with spiritual exercises; and even whilst in the body, I think we may attain to a nearness with heaven and with our Lord, which may answer to the same mind as Enoch had, and be called a walking with God. Indeed I dare say you will agree with me that until we attain in some measure to this state, we live exceedingly below our privilege, and unworthy our high calling and birth. I would that we were as wise in these things as the children of this world are in their generation; for then we should count it only consistent with our adoption into so glorious a family, that we lived above present things, and in association with the interests of our Father and Friend, as strangers and pilgrims, and as made to sit in heavenly places in Christ.

How much do dying scenes tend to the increase of these affections; whether we are called to witness them

in another, or find the hand of God laid upon ourselves. In such moments we may say with Jacob, "Surely this is none other than the gate of heaven!"

If ever the redeemed are the care of ministering spirits, never more so than when heart and flesh are ready to fail; and surrounded by such ready and loving messengers of peace, and supported by the sure arm of Eternal Grace, I think one would be sorry to quit the bed of sickness and to return to the busy scenes of life, were it not the appointment of him whose will becomes our meat and drink. But we may be reconciled to the lengthened period which keeps us from seeing our Beloved face to face, when we consider that we are ripening for an increase of final glory, and that though remaining in a state of exercise and conflict, yet all that we sow to the Spirit shall yield us a more abundant harvest in the day of our God! In patience, then, let us possess our souls, and confide in his promise, who will uphold us to the end, and in whom we shall, ere long, finish our course with exceeding joy.

I long to hear from you, my beloved friend. You are seldom absent from my thoughts, and are ever borne upon my heart before God; and I trust we were brought together to the praise of his grace, and for our mutual comfort and edification; so that I long after you greatly in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and earnestly pray for the rapid increase of your soul in all the hidden life of Christ. Persuaded am I that you are under the watchful eye of our faithful Saviour, and that wherever you are, his consolations are prepared for you; for blessed pledges were given to you, my friend, of a love which changeth not, and marvellous compassions have been shed upon you from day to day.

I think the work of the Lord increases much amongst us, and of growing solidity in the state of the flock,

which is very rejoicing to behold. Pray for us, my friend, that we may all walk in the light. Remember us constantly in your intercourse with the Lord, as we ever do you. The smile of our merciful God be ever upon you.

I am in truth your tenderly attached,

M. S.

XXII.

*Dark Intruders—Common Error—Extremity and Trial—Reason for Dejection
—Of Gratitude—Boys' School—Girls' School.*

MY EVER DEAR FRIEND,

I WAS just sitting down to write to you when your letter was brought to my hands; and this is one of the instances among many others that we have a fellowship in spirit, though separated so far. My thoughts have been with you very perpetually, and the interest of my heart in your spiritual increase has never, I think, been felt so powerfully by me as since I heard from you the last time. Perhaps it originated in the complaint you made in that letter of the frame of mind which you then experienced. Your spirit seemed troubled; anxious thoughts evidently harassed your soul. But these are no strange things; the pathway to heaven is often thronged by these dark intruders; and no doubt they are mercifully suffered, in order to exercise us in many a grace, and to afford opportunities for the confirmation of our faith in the sovereign and eternal purpose of God.

It appears to me a very common error into which the people of God are inclined to fall, that they seem to forget their dependant state, and that they owe as much

for the carrying on of the progressive work of sanctification, as for the first imparted principle in regeneration. We seem to act as if the Lord, after having given us this first blessing, left us to the exertion of our own strength in the improvement of it, and so we would live as upon a stock in hand; whereas we have to learn, from first to last, that he is the Author and Finisher of our faith, that it is he who worketh in us to will and to do, and we must be enabled experimentally to use the language of Isaiah, and say, "Thou, O Lord, hast wrought all our works in us." To this great end, my beloved friend, all these painful buffettings and humiliations tend; and when we find that our God makes use of these things, which, in the judgment of sense, would ruin us, for the furtherance of the spiritual life, we are led into admiring praise; and whilst we lie in the dust of self-abasement, we are constrained to exclaim, "Who is a God like unto thee!" O my friend, how sweet is that dear voice which we hear in the storm, "It is I, be not afraid!"

How blissful those moments of peace which follow upon the tumult of Satan's assault, and which testify to us that not only angels come and minister to us, but that the Lord of angels is our Comforter and support!

Were we not brought into situations of difficulty, we should lose a great part of the spiritual experience of the kingdom of Christ; and I know not how we could seek out the sweetness of most of the promises, unless our circumstances were those of extremity and trial. How much had all the church of Christ lost had Abraham never been called to the sacrifice of his son—and how rich an encouragement and powerful an incitement to willing suffering is such an example, in which we see how in the mount of the Lord it is seen; and can set to our seal also that we have found him a faith-

ful God, and that our extremity has been his opportunity !

Let us, my friend, thus use our trials, well knowing that all things shall work together for good to them who love the Lord, and counting it our privilege if in any measure we may be conformed to him who was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Even in spiritual desertions our Lord has not refused to set us the example, and to be tempted in all points as we ; and when we listen to the voice .of our incarnate God exclaiming, “ Why hast thou forsaken me ? ” surely we cannot refuse to drink of this cup, though the most painful to our soul ! And even herein we may find a sweetness which nothing but conformity with Christ could suggest.

At the same time, my beloved friend, I know there may be much sorrowful reason for the dejection of the soul. There is no situation into which we are thrown but has its peculiar dangers ; and I wonder not when I hear you say that prosperity in the state of the souls so dear to you has in some measure interfered with your private engagements. ’Tis a sad proof of the disposition of our hearts, in their natural state alienated from our God, that we can scarcely be trusted with blessings of this kind, and are prone to forget him when we can draw any sweetness out of broken cisterns. I beseech you, suffer not the snare, however you may be tempted —stir up the spiritual gift that is in you, and endeavour to blend in your heart’s affections the remembrance of past simplicity, when you were cast upon the protection and presence of the Lord for your all, with gratitude for that loan of present consolation which he extends to you.

In this way those things which might prove a snare will ultimately be overruled, and beholding the Lord

in the whole, you may say with David, “ O what great troubles hast thou shewed me, and yet hast thou turned again and refreshed me. Thou hast brought me to great honour and comforted me on every side.” In these views we sometimes experience the meltings of gratitude and love, and we are also prepared for any reverse which we may experience, by remembering from whom we have received our all, and how at liberty he is to manifest his sovereignty by any dispensation which pleaseth him. But, oh, he is a God of mercy and faithfulness! He changeth not; though we provoke him to visit our sins with scourges, “ yet his loving-kindness will he not utterly take away, nor suffer his truth to fail; ” punishment is his strange work, but he delighteth in mercy!

I hope, my beloved friend, you are seeking to dive more and more into the unfathomable riches of the covenant. There is a blessed remedy for every disease; and all kinds of suffering, however fearful, will prove a sanctified endurance, if only we are thus devoted more simply to the service of him. Blessed will that period be when all present exercises shall have their appointed end; and arising in the likeness of our Master, we shall be satisfied therewith.

I shall be glad, my beloved friend, in any measure to communicate with you upon the interesting subject of the schools in which we are both engaged. Our school here for boys has been formed entirely upon Bell’s plan. Surely, in the instruction of so many of the rising generation, even in a political point of view, it would seem necessary to instil some motives by which they might act, and to point them to the proper object of faith. In our school of girls we have adopted those parts of Bell’s plan which we approved; but as both of them have hitherto been conducted upon our private means, we

have been at liberty to form them according to our own views. A few months however will probably bring them upon the public, and looking forward to futurity, we have solicitously sought to have this method of instruction to the children here secured.

I do not think we should look for much spiritual effect to follow upon merely training up the children in a weekly repetition of some portion of the catechism. We should find this very deficient here, were we content with this. To bring them therefore to more serious instruction we find it necessary to see them privately, and to form them into classes for more familiar converse than the form of the weekly school allows. My brother, who is at present associated in the ministry, catechises the boys in the Church on Sunday at noon; and before church in the morning they are examined in what they have learnt from the book. The girls fall to my charge, excepting that on the Saturday afternoon the governesses (these were voluntary assistants from the young ladies of the flock) hear them a portion of the catechism. We have Watts for the little ones, and my explanation of the church catechism for those who are older.

On Sunday morning I have all those who are in the youngest classes for expounding what they have learnt. After tea I have the elder girls for instruction upon doctrinal or experimental truth; and during the week, as our school is but for three hours in the afternoon, I see them as they can come in different classes in the morning,—some for conversation, some for reading Pilgrim's Progress, and some for any little history which may interest them and afford occasion for pointing out the truth.

It appears to me that the chief benefit derived from these schools in a *spiritual sense*, is, that numbers of

young people are thus brought together with whom otherwise we might never have been acquainted—that the instructing them in temporal things gives a sort of influence over them,—and that it rests with ourselves zealously to exert that influence for bringing them at other hours and opportunities under more enlarged gracious efforts. I never expect much from the school at large, except as it puts them before us for seeking an influence over them, and as it exercises them in orderly habits, and gives them the form of knowledge in what they learn by rote.

We have no manufactory connected with the school. We found it necessary in order to obtain girls at a more advanced age than it is usual to send them to school, that we should confine it to half the day, and we find them make greater progress than in most schools kept all the day. We have prizes four times in the year. Generally they (the girls) stay with us, except some particular circumstances arise to oblige the parents to take them home. Our number is confined, at present, to a hundred each (school), on account of the size of the room. We seldom have our number unfilled.

As to a master, my friend, I wish I could recommend one. Probably we may have applications when our new school is built, and I will remember your desire; we have a master for the boys who are instructed in the evening; but the girls have hitherto been taught by the voluntary exertions of the young ladies in the town, who, united with my sister and myself, take the weeks in turn. This is one reason why the girls stay with us; they become attached and make many efforts at home to gain the privilege of remaining in the school; but I find (as I dare say you will) that when they are taken away they continue to come to the *religious* instruction.

Blessed be God, He continues to smile upon our

vineyard, and is abundant in compassions towards us ; even when seemingly obstructed in labour (through sickness), the Lord brings his children to us when we cannot go to them.

I think, my beloved friend, you might find an advantage in adopting a plan which I have found very useful to myself and others. I have drawn together scriptures in confirmation of the several doctrines, graces, and forbidden lusts, &c., six of these I give out every Sunday to the elder of the flock, they learn one each day in the week, and repeat them on Sunday evening. I explain the nature of the doctrine and the texts in appointed meetings, and find this plan most excellent both in building them up in knowledge, and also in furnishing them with a scripture for reflection each day. If you think it will suit your plans, I will copy the texts and send them.

Pray tell your dear Christian family that my prayers, such as they are, are with you all.

I am yours in the truest bonds of Christ !

M. S.

XXIII.

Exercises of Affliction—Sacred Distresses—Evidences in Scholars—Fever.

BLESSED be God that though temporary suspension of intercourse may sometimes exercise us with each other whilst we are here below, the family of Christ have a uniting bond which neither life nor death can ever prevail to destroy. In these bonds you and I are one for ever—and the time is not far distant when we shall realize them in the rich enjoyment of all that our everlasting home can bestow ! My heart's reflections are

I hope I may say prosperity continues to be vouchsafed to our Zion. Hitherto the Lord has helped us, and increase of holy separation from the world marks the character of those amongst us that have taken up the name of Christ. The zealous desire too of promoting the kingdom of heaven seems to grow into efforts made by those who have themselves tasted that God is gracious. We have a severe fever in the town which has spread exceedingly and seized many young ones, amongst them my dear little Maria, who now lies on the sofa beside me, recovering we hope, but very weak and reduced. She grows quite a mature girl, and a great comfort to us. Indeed she has always been hitherto a sweet treasure lent us of the Lord. May He continue her so, or if pleased to take her to Himself, grant her an abundant entrance into His kingdom. I desire to possess everything in the spirit of Job, who could say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

Farewell, let us meet at the throne of grace, and believe me always your most tenderly affectionate friend,

M. S.

XXIV.

To a Young Minister — Occasions for Gratitude — Accompanying Humility — Means of Preservation — Meditating on Final Joys — Certainty of Awaiting Trials — State of Flock — Library — Pursuits of Study.

I AM continually thinking of you and your pursuits, my dearest —, and should more frequently express these my feelings in writing, but my hours are increasingly pressed upon, especially during the late affecting scenes in which the concerns of many souls have claimed

vineyard, and is abundant in compassions towards us ; even when seemingly obstructed in labour (through sickness), the Lord brings his children to us when we cannot go to them.

I think, my beloved friend, you might find an advantage in adopting a plan which I have found very useful to myself and others. I have drawn together scriptures in confirmation of the several doctrines, graces, and forbidden lusts, &c., six of these I give out every Sunday to the elder of the flock, they learn one each day in the week, and repeat them on Sunday evening. I explain the nature of the doctrine and the texts in appointed meetings, and find this plan most excellent both in building them up in knowledge, and also in furnishing them with a scripture for reflection each day. If you think it will suit your plans, I will copy the texts and send them.

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in the appointed way, than when we are passing the Red Sea. How transporting will be that triumphant shout of praise which shall rend the heavens when our Beloved returns, and which shall eternally take place of sighs and groans ! And O how should we grow into that hardness of Christian resolution and faith which may exclaim with the apostle, that these *light* afflictions are but for a moment. My thoughts are much in this strain, for we have known much distress lately of various kinds, and I have found in these nights of sadness how dear the counsels of God are, and that there is a power in our precious privileges which sweetens every dispensation whatever it may be.

In the arms of our faithful Lord may we peacefully repose ourselves night and day, and in all the journey home remember that whom He loveth He chasteneth, and that He has said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” Are these delights, my beloved friend, the hidden manna which sustains and satisfies you ? I trust you are growing in solidity of Christian devotion, and can say with increasing devotedness, “I know whom I have believed ! ”

As to what you complain of in the little evidence of impression amongst your scholars, do not let this discourage you. Perhaps there may be feeling unseen by you. I have had many instances among my flock of children instructed, perhaps four or five years, in such seeming indifference, and yet have been brought out into more consistency at last than many of whom I had more sanguine expectations. All that we can do is to go on honestly labouring to impart spiritual knowledge to them and to be earnest in prayer and dependence

perpetually leading to that blessed period. The vain and transitory offers of earthly peace, and the perpetual occurrence of those sorrows, which are the special inheritance of the saints, make me increasingly persuaded of the desireableness of resting for ever in Jesus, and going home to that company of glorious associates in heaven, where all will be fulness of joy, and it will be enough that we are ever with the Lord !

How full of grace and wisdom are the dispensations of Christ to his people—on one hand, following them with afflictive trials by which they may be loosened from present rest, and excited to rise upwards for their expectations—and on the other, allured by merciful revelations made to faith, by which the soul can enter into eternity unappalled, and behold a prepared kingdom beyond the grave to which their warmest desires are given.

No doubt all the varied scenes through which we pass, and all the indescribable exercises of soul which try us within are the ripening of our souls for God himself. Let us endeavour more and more to esteem them so, for this will make the heaviest cross welcome in love, and will resolve all our will into Christ's, with much delight in His work.

I speak to you as one that is baptized with suffering. I conclude that as a follower of Jesus it must necessarily be your portion. The new interests which are awakened in our hearts by union with Him open a source of new and sacred distresses ; so that, even should we escape those kinds of afflictions which many pass through, yet we must in some degree find our association with that people who in God's word are declared to be “poor and afflicted.”

'Tis a sweet motive to contentment and thankfulness, however, that we are tracing our Master's steps, and that we never perhaps have greater evidence that we are

I hope I may say prosperity continues to be vouchsafed to our Zion. Hitherto the Lord has helped us, and increase of holy separation from the world marks the character of those amongst us that have taken up the name of Christ. The zealous desire too of promoting the kingdom of heaven seems to grow into efforts made by those who have themselves tasted that God is gracious. We have a severe fever in the town which has spread exceedingly and seized many young ones, amongst them my dear little Maria, who now lies on the sofa beside me, recovering we hope, but very weak and reduced. She grows quite a mature girl, and a great comfort to us. Indeed she has always been hitherto a sweet treasure lent us of the Lord. May He continue her so, or if pleased to take her to Himself, grant her an abundant entrance into His kingdom. I desire to possess everything in the spirit of Job, who could say, “The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”

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M. S.

XXIV.

To a Young Minister — Occasions for Gratitude — Accompanying Humility —

Means of Preservation — Meditating on Final Joys — Certainty of Awaiting

Trials — State of Flock — Library — Pursuits of Study.

I AM continually thinking of you and your pursuits, my dearest and should more frequently express

a diligent attention. 'Tis joyful, however, to me that I hear of your standing fast in the liberty of Christ, and that his loving-kindness is so abundantly manifested to you in all your ways. Glory be to his name that he has gone beyond our utmost expectations, and visited you with a peculiar measure of grace! Here is a double claim upon the surrender of your heart, and motives for love which, I trust, will take deeper root in your bosom with increasing experience.

In every way these things are affecting; for certainly, where present manifestations such as these are enjoyed, future scenes of labour and exercise may reasonably be expected, for the Lord does nothing in vain, and giving much, does it most generally in preparation for much service.

But what shall we say? even here another spring for gratitude is opened, since the privilege of being spent for Christ is great, and the acknowledgment of such labours of love in the eternal world so surpassing in grace and love as to swallow up all expressions in wondering adoration and praise; whilst watering another we receive the invigorating dews upon ourselves—whilst sowing to the Spirit we are preparing to reap of the Spirit everlasting life—and whilst witnessing the growing loveliness of the souls for whom we work, a present most delightful sensation is shed abroad in the heart. 'Tis then a work from first to last altogether blessed, and altogether the gift of unspeakable free grace wheresoever any are called to it.

To you it will be entered upon with every advantage; and I am constantly thankful that your ministerial service is gradually called forth as it is in your present situation. With careful observation too I mark in your letter every token of accompanying humility. Young as you are, and inexperienced as to the world, it might

have given Satan much opportunity to harass you with thoughts of self-gratulation; and without a corresponding gift of grace, you might have been exposed to the subtle workings of pride and vanity. Where these corruptions prevail, an impediment is immediately placed in the way of all future improvement; influence will gradually abate and the soul be overspread with disease. How merciful then is our great Physician, who seeing the danger to which our wayward nature might be thus exposed, is pleased to attend such circumstances with internal experiences, conflicts and humiliations, which perpetually remind us from whence our sufficiency flows, and enables us in this as in other respects to say, "All my fresh springs are in thee."

The great means of preservation is our never allowing any occupations to interfere with private duty. Indeed experience teaches us that whenever we do, a degree of barrenness immediately follows, and all consolation in public work is interrupted. You ought then to bear in mind that your appointments with God should be faithfully kept, and no claim supersede the prevailing one which Christ has upon your loving nearness of spirit with him. I find this, my friend, the sweetest of all refreshments. I look back upon a pilgrimage which has been through a peculiarly thorny path, and in all situations of sorrow or of joy the bosom of Jesus has been the dearest refuge I have found. Blessed be his name, it is so yet; and in the midst of all the pressing occupations of life which crowd upon me, still it remains my delight to call upon my soul and say, "Return unto thy rest." What will it be when entireness of rest is found in him! and the promise of entering thereupon is held forth to us as a merciful excitement to bear our tribulations joyfully. But we can little appreciate the excellency of those scenes which are thus intended.

Truly our inheritance is such as might claim a more devoted consideration than we generally give it; and were we more diligently employed in meditation upon the several terms by which our final joys are described, should we not, do you think, experience a more transporting sense of them? I believe we should, and that saints are much too grovelling in their views and expectations. "According to your faith be it unto you," might be applied here; and surely our privilege is great that we have such strong wings given to us by which we may soar to the very heights of glory, and embrace the substance of the things hoped for. O limit not the readiness of Christ—you are not straightened in him—his engagement is that "blessing he will bless thee," and his exhortation is—"Ask what thou wilt." Surely had we such an unlimited permission from any earthly friend, who had *power* likewise to fulfil our wish, we should joyfully lay hold upon it. Wherever therefore we fail herein towards our Lord, it is because we have unworthy thoughts of that faithfulness and tenderness with which he carries us eternally in his bosom. It is well frequently to chide ourselves on this account, and to refresh our souls by enlarged remembrances of all those unspeakable mercies towards us which have been more than the sands on the sea-shore. It must also be well-pleasing in his sight when he beholds us thus occupied, and that we find it our joy to recal the loving kindness of our God. May he give you a memory that is faithful and full of humble gratitude, and may it prove your continual friend through this tempestuous sea. Trials will surely await you; no follower of Jesus ever escaped them; but in an especial manner as a worker in the vineyard, increased avenues to pains will be felt; for, like your Master, you will have to carry the sorrows and bear the griefs of many: to do this you

are willing—for where the Spirit's baptism is, there is a readiness to all manner of tribulation, and suitable supports will never fail you; nay, these very circumstances will but introduce you the more frequently and more intimately to the bosom of your God. My supplications are offered up for you with a true and affectionate heart, and I trust we meet in spirit, my friend, with perpetual nearness. In the kingdom of our Lord we shall meet in better enjoyments, and to this kingdom I eagerly look for us both.

Our interesting particulars, as they relate to the flock, I always conclude you receive from other quarters. We proceed in our usual course, only with great increase of numbers weekly, and in some of whom a very vigorous work of grace is evidenced. I am sorry that M—— does not attend so much as I could wish—he seldom appears on Thursday evenings, which I think is a pity: surely they ought to be valuable to him, and at any rate might put his mind upon a useful investigation of the several subjects through which we pass. I fear he yields to despondency, and to the sure consequence, irresolution.

We have undertaken to establish a library for the poor, upon the plan mentioned in yours, and subscribers flock in. It seems to be a sort of thing which meets the taste of most. But we want some information as to the method you pursue, and whether you have any regular rules, which of course I should think you must. Will you send us any hints which might be useful? A spirit of liberality abounds amongst our serious people here—and it is a sweet evidence of their *primitive* spirit. Indeed I always think the Christians here have a remarkable similarity with the simplicity of the first times.

My dear sister is in a very declining state of health.

She is at Stonefall at present. Maria is chiefly with her; and though some interruption to her studies is the consequence, I think it benefits her, and in spiritual things she seems to settle and increase. I wish her too to give time to the pursuits of those things which strengthen the mind. If she is ever to labour for Christ, the advantage would be great to have secured that sort of attainment first; as a *means* they are often very useful.

Farewell. May the Lord for ever keep and comfort you. I am ever your tenderly-attached mother in our beloved Lord,

M. S.

XXV.

When Absent from Home—Incessant Occupation—Trial of Separation—Barrenness of the Place—Feeling for the Young Children—Regret of Want of Ministerial Refreshment—Comparison with what she had left—Disappointment elsewhere—Thankfulness for the Pastures at Home—State of the Invalid—Motives to seek Helps for Health—Progressive Development of the Life of Faith.

I HAD begun a letter to you, my dearest —, with the hope of sending it by — but was unexpectedly prevented from bringing it to a conclusion before she went from —, and I have committed to the flames what I had begun; so that I now sit down to fulfil my promise by post. It might almost appear unnecessary to write, as my time draws very near for my return home; but I know that at all times you welcome any tidings from me; this you see is the confidence of long-tried affection.

Our occupations here are incessant, although somewhat different in their nature from such as usually engage my hours; but I contrive to go on steadily with

my writing, feeling that this opportunity should not be allowed to pass without seizing the occasion for redeeming what, in this respect, I lost before I came here.

The sense of that blessed presence which is with us in every situation, makes me in the spirit of sweet repose in the Lord, notwithstanding that separation from the flock, which must always be felt in my heart as a trial; but experience renders faith more simple in its life and actions, and brings us into a more powerful capability of resting upon the promise, and of satisfaction in the divine decree. Herein, my beloved friend, my own soul is growing, I trust, into maturity, and which I earnestly hope is equally experienced and proved by those I dearly love. The Lord's faithfulness is ever manifested towards us, and therefore we will confidently rest upon the accomplishment of this purpose in us all.

All here is externally barren indeed, no means of grace, no sweet communion in the spirit, excepting what we find in our own little circle; and I fear there is little prospect of improvement in this respect.

I have not undertaken a school, for I did not expect to be here more than two sabbaths, and some difficulty occurs in assembling the children. The place is much more frequented than it used to be, and the young people are in consequence engaged very much during the week-days, and, I fear, we may also say on the Lord's day likewise. Yet there are numbers of children towards whom my heart yearns in tender anxiety; and I do hope that something may yet be done in the way of a Sunday-school.

Little can you conceive, my dear girl, of the difference which we experience on the Lord's sweet day of holy rest. Our first Sunday was spent much at home, for we were both very unwell, and even if we had oppor-

tunity were not able to do anything ourselves. We went to the school-room, where the church service is read and a sermon preached, but the coldness and irreverence which we beheld was truly affecting ; and although I endeavoured to abstract my mind from this circumstance, and to remember that the grace of prayer is in the heart, I could not entirely withstand the interruption which the manner of reading the prayers occasioned in the mind. From this cold service we returned home sad in spirit as it respected the feelings drawn out towards the people ; but thankful to that gracious Lord whose light has cheered our path and conducted us into pastures where the bread and the water of life so abundantly prevail.

On Thursday evening we attended a chapel where a missionary sermon was preached, but the meeting was very small, and the address from the preacher nothing very powerful ; but it was pleasant to hear the name of Jesus ! Yesterday we went in an open carriage to R. L., hoping to meet with something more satisfactory ; but alas ! after going through incessant rain and getting entirely wet we were met with an awful testimony of man's prejudice and ignorance. Some good things were said so far as they stood alone, but connected with the train of argument used were no longer admissible by the Christian mind. An evident degree of extreme bitterness against such as profess greater spirituality ran through the whole sermon, and in the conclusion we could only sigh and lament that so much of error should have dominion in the soul. We returned home, where after changing our clothes we sat down to spend the rest of the day in communion with each other, and in reading, in which, in the evening, Miss — joined us.

May we ever, my beloved friend, estimate the bless-

ings the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon us, and use every circumstance of life to the promotion of gratitude and diligence in our way through those pastures which he has been pleased to provide for our souls! I believe that I shall return home deeply impressed by these views. O may they tend to quicken every energy to the labour of love, and to excite still more and more to the work which the Lord has appointed in our dear little flock!

It was my intention to be at home next Sunday, but some circumstances have occurred which make me think it would be desirable to stay the full time for which I took the lodging, which was to next Tuesday; and I have been confirmed in this resolve by a letter from my sister this morning, who is anxious that I should not leave this place yet, and also fears that all infection might not be gone from the house by that time. I have no fears of this description, but agree with her that it is more prudent to stay where I am a little longer; so that I shall not leave this according to present regulations until the Tuesday in next week, it may be a day or two later; but certainly I trust to be at home by the Sunday after next.

Our first week gave little promise of any advantage from the change of air, my little darling being so entirely overdone by the journey, that she lay down almost the whole of the day, and had a slow creeping fever upon her which gave me some apprehension that she might have caught a serious cold; this threw her back in her state and she is only beginning to recruit; being still extremely languid and quite disinclined to move out of the room. As to myself I suffered in some measure like her, but recovered sooner, and I think the sea-bathing, which I begun last Saturday and repeated to-day, may agree with me. What care and attention

these poor bodies require! Yet, if they are consecrated to the service of our Lord, we may joyfully cherish them as instruments in his hand to promote his will in the earth; this reconciles to all the toil upon this subject, which otherwise would be burdensome. And when I remember that this falling abode has been purchased by precious blood, and that it is to be the fellow-heir of an everlasting inheritance in glory with the ransomed soul, I feel that there is a strong obligation laid upon us, and that we are bound to seek such helps as may be blessed in rendering us vigorous for the Christian conflict. I believe that, generally speaking, we consider this too little, and that we are not sufficiently alive to the importance of maintaining the evidence of the body's consecration to Christ.

How wonderful is that progressive developement of the life of faith which we experience as we travel towards our rest! I am sometimes much affected by feeling the undeniable evidence that we are only attaining to *true* and *extensive* discoveries when we are about to quit the scene in which they would be serviceable in preserving from temptation and the snares of sin. How differently do we consider truths, now that we take a retrospect of what is past, from the way in which they were considered when experience was low in our hearts. O, my beloved friend, I am sure your heart will beat in agreement with mine upon this point, and you will unite with me in saying that, at least, *judgment* has passed through powerful refinement since those days, and I will believe *affections* also. Thus may we ever agree in testifying of those truths in which our own dependent condition is increasingly realized, and by which the glory of divine faithfulness is so much set forth before our admiring eyes! I am persuaded that it is in this way that the Lord teaches us to profit;

taking up our own experiences as witnesses to the lesson which he designs us to learn, and training us to the matured state of the ripened Christian through the very circumstances of life in which nature and self have been unfolded to our view. And what have we to desire or to hope independently of this great object? O nothing, my beloved friend; here all our interests centre; here all that is truly estimable rests; and in the knowledge of our dear Redeemer, we participate in the only source of true blessedness here or for ever?

Is it not a sweet antidote against all the uncertainties and all the miseries of this world? Yes, truly, and I and you have found that the precious balm of Gilead can never lose its power, and that in the smile of Jesus there is sure and effectual peace. * * * *

Farewell, my beloved friend, may every comfort ever rest upon you! You know how unfeignedly I ask these things in your behalf, and I need not remind you how truly I love you, and am in very truth,

Your most affectionate friend in lasting bonds,
M. S.

XXVI.

Death-bed Scene of a Young Disciple—Passive Obedience.

I CANNOT let another parcel be sent from this place, my dear ——, without dropping a few lines to you. I should have taken a larger sheet, but that your brother has changed his mind as to the time of sending the packet, and left me only an hour to send my letters down. My spirit has been so much with you these last days as to keep me in a state of continual sympathy—and no wonder,—the trial of your natural affection has

been severe, and much more so, considering that the providence of God deprived you of the comfort which might have been received by seeing your dear sister; but though without this consolation I trust better communications were with you, and the present manifestation of Christ your help and stay. Every thing relative to poor J——'s departure is calculated to give you comfort. I was with her the Monday before her release, and had an interview which proved a great refreshment to my own soul. She expressed her usual affectionate delight in seeing me, and after requesting her mother to leave us alone, she rose up in the bed and kissed me, saying, 'O, I am glad to see you once more before I die, I wish to tell you much which I experience of joy in God.' I said, "'Tis blessed, my dear J——, when the Spirit's power is felt cheering us in the moment of extremity.' 'Yes,' she said, 'I can say so. Last year at this time I was in H——, I believe, taking, as I thought, my pleasure. O how much more pleasure is it to me to lay on this bed.' 'Then,' I said, 'you can adopt the words, "pain is sweet if thou my God art near." 'I feel it so much,' she replied, 'that perhaps you will wonder when I say I could often *laugh*—nay, I dare say, I do sometimes smile, my heart is full of joy and gladness.' I asked her if she had no interruption to her enjoyments? 'Not now,' she said, 'at first I had, but now I see heaven opened, I believe I shall soon be before the throne of God. O how glad I am I read my Bible much when I was first ill, for now I cannot, and I find sweet promises brought to my mind as I lay thinking.' I asked her if she suffered much. 'Yes, I do, but what are *my* sufferings, what did Jesus endure for me! besides, every one brings me nearer the end.' She then talked to me about New Zealand. 'I think it is the greatest calling in the

world to do anything for Christ's kingdom.' We conversed much upon this interesting subject, in which she evidenced such a zeal for the promotion of that cause as much delighted me. It was a proof of that true spirit of love which animated her, and shews the free and disinterested spirit of faith. When I thought she was exhausted by conversing, I said, 'I will leave you now, J——, for the present, when we have asked a blessing from our Lord.' She said, 'O, I feel quite refreshed and better,' and sitting up again, she again kissed me, and stroking my face said, 'I shall see you again when we appear before Jesus, I love you dearly. I love Jesus for giving me all these blessings, and I love you for bringing me to him.' I could scarcely bear the fulness of my heart, she talked with such affecting simplicity and such tenderness of soul as melted mine and sent me home with feelings better imagined than described. Of course much more passed between us, and she said much upon her sins, and the pardon of them; but thus much I thought might give comfort to your heart whilst you sorrow for the departure of your sister; —a sister she is, I trust, in better bonds than those of nature—translated a little before us to the higher regions of blessedness and liberty, and waiting our perfection amongst the blissful multitude. Now truly do we feel the power of that blessed word from which we draw our pure consolations! There is our dear J—— numbered amongst the faithful witnesses of Christ's promise, who was with her through the shadow of death—now triumphant with departed spirits, and expressing her love in the sweeter strains of immortality—and here are we, sorrowing indeed, but not as they who are without hope—possessing an assurance which robs death of its sting, and makes us with heart-felt experience agree with the Spirit, "Blessed are the

dead which die in the Lord." I trust, my dear ——, your soul apprehends these pledges of our Saviour's never-failing love. O may this dispensation, with every other, work together for the increase of your simplicity, and your daily experience of the spirit of adoption shew that we are but strangers and pilgrims here. How many of our dear little flock are now in the fold above! How many shall very soon be called to join them! Nay, how soon, my friend, may we be the blessed subjects of this eventful change, and be bidden to drop this tabernacle, and appear before our God! Well, may we be ready,—not laden with thick clay—not encumbered with earth—not fettered by creature entanglements—nor defiled with sluggishness and distance of heart. It is our interest, whether we are preparing for a life of labour or for an early call from present objects, to maintain the vigilance of watchmen upon their tower, and whatever acts as a stimulus to this great end is surely a welcome visitation from the God of our life.

I wonder I do not hear from you again. I wrote you a long letter by post, which I hope you received; but I do not complain or harbour hard thoughts of your affection to me. I know what it is to be day and night in laborious application of mind, and that when the body is exhausted, even whilst the heart is full of warm affection, there is a disinclination to the effort of sitting down immediately to write. With me I find it much so by reason of the dreadful headaches with which I am tried. I much fear they will fix upon me, and it is a very serious hindrance to most of my pursuits; but passive obedience must be practised as well as active, and this kind of trial brings out many graces to the proof which would not be so exercised in a more busy scene. There is always work in our own gardens, and I dread the state described by the church in the Canticles,

"they made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." Never let us fall into such a state—let us deprecate it above all evils. I hope you are diligently gathering fruit from Jesus's passion, and living more and more by faith in him. O may he bless and cherish you, and be beautifying you daily for his temple above.

Farewell, believe me ever your most affectionately attached friend and mother,

M. S.

XXVII.

Riot—Desires for her dear Friend—The Communion.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I REALLY wish I could with propriety take a longer sheet of paper; but it is near one o'clock, and I am sure you would not wish me to do what would make me suffer afterwards. My mind has been agitated by hearing the riot in the street, which I suppose you would hear. O how exceedingly precious should we esteem the grace which makes us to differ in any wise ; for assuredly all human nature is alike depraved and alienated from God.

I hope the subject we had to-night would reach and rest upon your heart, exalting to your view the fulness of that remedy for all our wants which is laid up in Jesus. O my dearest friend, I covet for you the possession of such faith as may settle your mind in hope and love ; and I trust that you will ere long receive the assuring visits of the Blessed Spirit of heaven ! I love you, my sweet girl, with an anxious desire that you

may be preserved from the misery of having a faith soon shaken by the enemy, but that you may stand firm upon the rock, leaving all other dependencies and cleaving only to the Lord. Here only is rest to our poor tossed souls; for out of our beloved Lord there is no confidence or place to be found. And oh! how much sweeter is it to have one smile of an approving master in heaven than to live in all the fulness that this world can give. I think we have reason to say so every day, and continually to be longing for the habitation prepared above. Ah! how sweet will rest and joy be to such as have not had it here. And how delightful will the Hallelujahs of the blessed sound when once we hear and take part in the worship of heaven.

I wish I could go with you to-morrow to the table; my soul would be refreshed by such a renewal of the public worship. Pray for me, my beloved girl, and depend on it, if I can lift my heart to Jesus I will remember you. It is very blessed thus to love one another, and to be one in the glorious source of all good. I feel as if I would seek to be more thankful for gospel privileges than I have been, and I entreat the Lord that I may be less affected by outward circumstances, and more satisfied in seeking the hidden joys which he can give. Join me in this purpose, and let him who expired for us receive of the travail of his soul, and be the Lord of our hearts. I hope, my love, these affections breathe in your breast, and that the body and blood of our dear Lord may feed your soul and establish you in all inward consolations. God bless you—rest assured that I love you with tender love—and I hope ever shall.

Farewell, believe me in very truth, yours, ever affectionate and attached.

M. S.

XXVIII.

Consideration—Confidence—Support in Sorrows—Freeness of Love—Strong Sight—Prosperity of the Fold.

ALTHOUGH I have not received a letter lately, my dearest ——, yet I am not angry, considering how numerous your engagements are. I know what it is to have the mind in perpetual exercise, and I trust we can each firmly believe the faithful affection we have to each other, notwithstanding our communion may not be so frequent by letter as we wish. Blessed be God, we have a fellowship in our dear Redeemer, making us meet in spirit perpetually, and giving us, I doubt not, the mutual benefit of our interest at the throne of grace.

I cannot say how much I am supported in steady faith as to the Lord's dealings with you; and firm persuasions of his watchful compassions over you, make my heart to repose in Him in this respect, and to commit you in every situation to his everlasting keeping. Yet you are perpetually present to my mind, and especially so in our little meetings and social parties. I know that with your disposition you will feel a peculiar bond uniting you with us; our intercourse has been so constant, and our experience so full of the wonders of the Lord that I often think of you as sighing for the wings of a dove that you might come to us for a little season. But let not these wishes rest too much upon you; our present Christ is your abiding home, and His endearments better than ten thousand other comforts.

I grow into the feeling myself every day. I have many sorrows, my dear ——, which burden nature, but which give blessed opportunity for the life of faith;

and though I think the last few months have been laden with one painful affliction after another, still the manifest enrichment of God is in them. My soul is more stayed upon everlasting expectations, and my hopes in that reserved blessedness which is within the veil cheer me. 'Tis not enough that we should be brought in acquiescence into the dispensation of trial—to count it *all joy* is our privilege,—and to this condition I would that we should press more and more.

What steps can be so interesting or dear as those which have been trodden by Him we love? And where is the station so full of the most endearing accompaniments as the foot of the cross?

I believe that were we to act with more freeness of love this would be our abiding sentiment; for we see that affection in natural things makes all conditions welcome with the object that is dear to our heart. And let Jesus call us to associate with him in what depths he pleases, yet He is in the midst of fires and of waters with us, so that the loving heart of a disciple has enough to satisfy it, and all is well where He is found!

My beloved —, cultivate with diligent application at the feet of Jesus this precious disposition; and let the covenant of grace, which embraces every interest that is dear to you, be not only all your salvation but all your desire. Through my sharply-exercised course I have found all things directing me to this object, and that in proportion as I have attained it in any measure, my internal peace has been secured. O may we stand every furious assault that may beat upon us—and in every fearful storm be strong in Christ. Our fleeting period of trial hastens to its close, and glorious scenes await us where the fulness of all that can be communicated to the soul from God himself shall finish our conflict!

Our faith should give us a *strong sight*, enabling us to penetrate mortality, temptation, darkness, and every attendant upon our present journey, bringing down even to this wilderness those delights of a heavenly Eden, which are assuredly laid up for us!

May your course, my dearest ——, be marked with triumphs of grace in your own behalf, and with conquests of souls won, as you proceed, to accompany you in the pursuit of heaven. O be vigorous and fervent, as dependent and believing. Bear in your mind the faithfulness of Him who cannot lie, and who never can forget the labour of love which is carried on by his servants in earth, nor those peculiar communications of strength, wisdom, and comfort which so arduous a situation requires. He will supply all your need—and an eternity of rest and praise shall make us forget the toils of the way!

I think great prosperity rests upon our Zion at present—at least amongst those with whom I associate; a growth of solidity is evident in many, and numbers are added daily, I may say, to those who *profess* to be seekers.

Our room is crowded upon all opportunities. Yesterday, in different parties, I had one hundred and fifty young people. I am sure this will rejoice you; and this seems not half the number that come—and amongst them I trust there is a blessed remnant.

May Christ our Lord strengthen our bonds, and pour out of the abundance of His Spirit upon us.

Do not forget me in your prayers—I never do you. God ever bless and keep you, my dear ——.

I am ever your most affectionate mother in our dear Lord,

M. S.

XXIX.

To a Friend under the Pressure of Weighty Cares.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

THE description you give of all the cares which encompass you at present is truly affecting to my soul, and I earnestly beseech the Lord graciously to beam forth His presence upon you, with a light that will cheer and animate you in sustaining the trial. Your presentation of the circumstances belonging to the affliction has an impelling power to my affection, and I beseech our own dear Lord that His blessing be in and with it! We look for tokens hereof, and it is well; but it may be that the blessing is there *without* the sensible or visible token, and “blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe.” What is the life of faith but the living upon the *Invisible* One, who, not only in His own essence is thus unseen, but whose way is in the sea—trackless but sustaining, wise and good! It is unspeakably gracious in Him thus to *prove* us, and to bring us into situations wherein we are constrained to live by faith and not by sight.

If this be so in respect of the concerns of this life, how much more so in spiritual and everlasting concerns. But in each, in all, what have we to do, my beloved, but in simplicity to live upon the Lord as an all-satisfying portion, and as governed and governing by and in His own essential holiness. The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre—“Who shall not glorify Thee, Thou King of Saints.” O yes, my friend, we will cast at His feet not only our love, but our desires and wishes, and offer Him a priestly sacrifice of every feeling and hope that we have.

May the Lord direct your thoughts and mine under this influence, so that even when the eternal joy of a soul or souls is in question we may urge our suit with *tempered* zeal, and always be enabled to hold it back from obtruding on God's prerogative and sovereignty. The little sentence, "Thy will be done," as *in heaven* too, is very comprehensive. I pray the Lord to deepen its power in our hearts' affections!

To you the Lord has dealt out a plentiful portion—love, free, and unwearied, and eternal, has been poured forth into your breast, making it *now* a hallowed temple. There may He ever hear the utterance of praise and trust, and listen to the tribute eternally sounding from your soul!

The thunder that is now rolling above my head awakens reflections that correspond with this reasoning. The sound is sublime. And under such parts of the divine operation the meditations take a higher flight, and introduce us into near vision of Him who is infinitely good and great. How precious the recollection, that the greatness and goodness is surrounded by the rainbow, so that *covenant* love prevails, and all that God is, is peace to us.

M. S.

XXX.

To the Same.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

IT is grief to me that I have no line from your pen. And after affectionately waiting long, and looking anxiously, I have resolved to *ask* the reason. I have

committed you tenderly to the tender Shepherd, and I have no doubt of his loving-kindness!

All must be well that is dispensed from this gracious hand; nevertheless sometimes the deeds of love are so expressed as to call forth much of painful experience to the subject of that love; therefore my heart sighs, and feels a sympathy with you in a kind of apprehension for you at this time. Send me a few lines then, by which suspense may be taken away.

You will be aware that my time is very much occupied just now, yet this cannot be the reason why you do not write to me. You are accustomed to allow for my silence without suspecting my affection, and seldom let me be the last writer so long unnoticed. I will not hold back my letter, but hastily conclude. Let it speak the love of my heart to you, and move you to a hasty reply.

M. S.

XXXI.

To the Same.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,
THANK you for your precious letter. I answer it only by a few lines, which I would not send were I not sure that you prefer a *note* before silence. I bless our God for all his mercies to you. It is precious in Him thus to relieve you of external care; and in respect of what is internal, we have not now to learn that He who dwelleth in us is always occupied in so arranging His property within as that it may give Him glory.

It is an acceptable offering when we bring Him a heart of *praise*; but he is not scrupulous herein.

pensive tokens of unquenchable love—love which surely to a redeemed sinner's heart should be most attractive, winning the warmest affections of our souls, and prevailing to establish Christ the sole possessor of the heart. Alas! my friend, how sadly we can stray from thoughts such as these, and how much too seldom are we enabled to exclaim, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way.” I often wish I had no heart for aught but my crucified Saviour, and that I might know more and more experimentally that scripture—“CHRIST is ALL in all.” Perhaps it would be so if we traced his steps more frequently to Gethsemane, Calvary and the grave; our stony hearts might soften in such scenes, and our love for Jesus be more tender and lively. May we pray for, and urge one another, my beloved friend, and not suffer ourselves to tarry in all the plain, nor rest till we reach, in powerful and saving experience, the bosom of our Beloved!

I hope you will not be discouraged at any change of frame or feeling which you may experience. I observe in your letter a sadness of spirit in the apprehension that the Comforter might again withdraw himself; and, indeed, no wonder after that you have found it is only the light of his countenance that can give you peace. But then, my friend, there are blessed purposes to be answered. By being suffered to walk on our way in darkness we know that he is without shadow.

Sometimes his dearest children mourn and are discouraged, even as the church in the Canticles complains, “By night in my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not.” Need we ask, Wherefore then causeth he grief to those for whom he has died? We know that “whom he loveth he chasteneth,” and that by this way it is we are made to prove our patience, self-denial, and faith; and surely

there cannot be a more satisfactory evidence to ourselves of sincerity than when we find a readiness to follow him, not only in joy but in grief, not merely for the comforts he can bestow, but for the excellency that is in himself. Therefore, let us be learning to count it all joy to fall into divers temptations, and to know how to be abased as well as how to abound.

'Tis a great mercy when sinners will be brought to *hear*. There may be more of *the heart affected* than may be known. "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation," says our Saviour. 'Tis often carrying on with certain power long before it is made manifest to others ; and perhaps it is oftener an abiding work when it makes not so much show at first. The Lord was not in the whirlwind, nor the fire, nor the tempest ; when he spake to Elijah, the still small voice was that which revealed Jehovah to him. So then do not faint in your mind, but, like the husbandman, sow the seed and wait patiently for the former and the latter rain. Assuredly the Lord Christ can never look down without concern upon the feeblest attempt of his people. Through every tribulation be stedfast and persevering in the work of love.

Respecting the frequenting of the Lord's Supper, it appears to be an especial means of grace, and, I think, where there are such desires for the receiving of it as you mention, it may be blessed to the increase of knowledge. I think I should not press any to go but such as gave evidence of a spiritual discernment ; but if any of moral views expressed anxiety, it would be well on such occasions to open to them the truths necessary to be received into the heart, in order to a real interest in Christ, and to recommend that they should attend to it with teachableness of spirit.

Your most affectionate

M. S.

XXXIII.

Assurance—Fasting—Sympathetic Feeling—Responsibility.

My communion with you, my beloved friend, has long been interrupted, but not in spirit; I think few days pass over my head without witnessing an affectionate remembrance of you before the Lord.

O who can understand the blessedness of having a hope towards God, excepting only those who possess the Holy Ghost shed abroad in their hearts! No wonder, my friend, the world knoweth us not, for it is only an experimental acquaintance with the secret of the Lord which can instruct us in the worth of his redeeming love!

You ask my opinion of assurance? It seems to be not so much attained as we could wish; and perhaps that it is not is owing to a sad proneness of believers to live below their privileges—and in some measure also that, however under the influence of divine grace, there is such a remainder of pride in our hearts as would make it dangerous for us always to rejoice. But by assurance I do not understand altogether the joyous sensation of unclouded views. This appears only one part of it. There are situations of mind when we cannot rejoice: the sense of past sin, the consciousness of present infirmity, and many other affections belonging to our spiritual experience will often be so pressing upon us, as to keep our souls like a weaned child; and yet there may be a solid persuasion of the loving-kindness of the Lord, of his readiness to save the wretched, and of the token of that readiness given to us in those very feelings under which we sigh. And indeed if we examine into the expressions which break from our

hearts and lips at such times, we shall find this part of assurance oftener possessed by us than we are aware. *My God! my Father! my Beloved!* are appeals to the mercy-seat, which are perpetually breaking from us, perhaps whilst inwardly heart-broken and distressed. And sure this is none other than the language spoken of by the apostle, as being the voice of the Spirit,—He crieth for us, and within us, “*Abba Father,*” and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Neither indeed can we understand that exhortation in Isaiah 1. 10, unless we admit that even he that walketh in darkness is privileged to stay himself upon his God.

As to the other part of assurance, my beloved friend, it appears to be a strong cordial reserved for times when great trials and much tribulation are appointed. We find of the scripture saints, that their triumphant confidence was usually expressed upon some time of extremity—or in the prospect of death it seems also granted as a reward of grace to the diligent and devoted soul.

Surely it is a jewel worthy our highest ambition, not only as a privilege, but also as the strongest incentive to faithfulness. The love of Christ constrains us; and to be able to say, ‘who gave himself for me,’ seems sufficient, by the Spirit’s blessing, to animate us with lively and vigorous affection to give ourselves and all we have or are to him. Let us then seek it perseveringly, not being discouraged if our Lord doth not immediately grant it; yet seeking to remove every impediment, and to be watching and waiting for him as they who wait for the morning. ’Tis surely this assurance that puts life into our service, and is the means of quickening to acts of praise and cheerful self-denial.

As to your other question about fasting. Our Saviour does not seem to discountenance it, but rather on

some occasions to recommend it ; so that, if rightly used, it may be a means to good ; but all it can do is to bring the body into a reduced frame, or shew our readiness to abstain from even lawful use of flesh. But it has been sadly abused, and the leaven of self-righteousness is so infused in all our nature that I own I should be afraid of its proving any comfort or rest in *itself* to the soul. Should it, however, tend to bring us into a state of greater abasement, then it might in this way be used. But if it have anything in it which would interfere with the clearest views of Christ's all-sufficiency, it becomes a hateful rival to him, and indeed, in many cases, would rather be substituted for devotion than promote it. I once observed it superstitiously ; therefore perhaps I am the more jealous of its being one of the refuges of lies, to which we are inclined to flee. But then, my dear friend, it seems not altogether to be despised, but rather to have scripture authority upon particular occasions.

As for your dear sister, my heart always bounds with affectionate sympathy towards her when I read your accounts. O may she be blessed and watered with precious showers from heaven, and be one of the pleasant plants of Christ ! We shall know each other in the kingdom of our God, and even here, I trust, we live together in the bonds of Jesus. How affectingly the glorious privilege and safety of the elect is described in the epistle to the Ephesians ; particularly in the 3rd chapter, in which there is such strong consolation for any who feel that mighty Spirit working in them ! Be strong then, my beloved sister in Christ, and, Oh ! may we be named in his family, and possess one heart and mind !

I trust you will feel your responsibilities, not in the way of fear, but trusting the Lord to fulfil his purposes in and by you. O remember his faithfulness, who is

near at hand to guide you in every perfect way. The retrospect of wonders performed for me excites me to believe for the same tender mercy in all your way. May I recommend your reading Marshall's Gospel Mystery of Sanctification; I think it would be very beneficial to you; it was a sweet employment to me.

May our dear Lord be with you, and bless and prosper all your ways to his glory and your establishment.

I am ever, in the bonds of Jesus,

Your affectionately attached,

M. S.

XXXIV.

*Various Subjects applicable to Private Experience and Ministerial Usefulness—
Spiritual Distresses—Arrangement of Time—Prayer—Passing Tempers—
Decision.*

I REJOICE in an opportunity which presents itself this evening, my dear —, for holding a little communion with you; and I am more particularly glad to embrace it, because from the style of your last two letters I suspect that there is much painful exercise passing in your soul, and that some deep waters frequently swell upon and threaten you. But you will agree with me, that these considerations are not the most anxious in our spiritual distresses. The great object to ascertain is, from whence the trials spring, and whether they effect the desirable end of our sanctification. Our appointed inheritance here below is one of *increasing increase*; and to this fellowship we are appointed in love; as the apostle tells the Philippians, “to you *it is given*, in the behalf of Christ, not only to

believe, but also to suffer for His name." Yet one would desire that the measure of sorrow might be clearly for *righteousness* sake;—there is so much of corruption blended in all we are and do, that we find mixed in conflict a bitterness which is unspeakable. However, my dear ——, may integrity always preserve you, and the furnace be a refining fire!

I have very frequently had some anxious reflections about you. I highly estimate your privileges at ——, as I have reason to do, and feel unceasingly grateful to God and to your kind and valuable instructor; but I have sometimes feared that in the Christians of that place there lacked *that degree of fervor in the love of Jesus*, which is certainly a great preservation from the infection of lukewarmness, or that propensity to forget our first love to which we are subject. I may be mistaken; only two or three trifling things have given such an impression to my mind,—perhaps, as much as any thing, a few expressions in your letters indicative of tender recollections of those times when redeeming love was so much the theme. But I think our flock is very peculiar in this feature. There is something perpetually invigorating to the heart of God's child when our bleeding Lord is brought forth as the beloved subject of converse, and the eyes of each communing saint seem fastened upon Him; and in this way we may frequently say with soberness of faith and love, did not our hearts burn within us as we talked by the way? When *He* is the addresser of the heart, no doubt a holy fire must be kindled within! But wherefore are you cast down and sad? You complain of conscious backslidings of heart;—these are miserable things; and the nature of your studies probably tends to lead you into a dull frame. It frequently happens; and every means possible should be used to prevent such an evil.

I know not how you arrange your time, but I would advise a settled plan of consecration of your *first* hours to more immediate spiritual pursuits. A certain portion set apart for prayer, meditation, and reading the scriptures, lays the foundation most generally for a day of serious enjoyment even in the midst of our ordinary occupations. But if intercourse with heaven is deferred till late in the day or evening, the consequence is, that we bring an exhausted mind, and perhaps find much difficulty in stirring up a serious and abstracted spirit of devotion; and indeed the Holy Spirit must be grieved whenever He is put off as a *secondary* consideration. But perhaps this is not your case; and early rising may bless you with opportunity for rich fellowship with Jesus, whilst your thoughts are less encumbered with other things.

Another method of preserving a lively state of soul appears to me to be that of vigilantly *watching* unto prayer. We are apt too much to dismiss the subject after our stated communion, and to suffer a lengthened period of absence from the Lord in hours of forgetfulness. This I have found in myself, and observed in others, to be a certain means of inducing estrangement of heart with God, and a want of that habitual holy boldness which it is our privilege to possess. It is a remedy to the evil when little short ejaculations are used from time to time, and little portions of the scripture called to remembrance. This is like a constant spring which bubbles up perpetually its fruitful and cheerful influences, and keeps the spirit in a state of preparation both for momentary trial, and also for more lengthened intercourse.

But perhaps one of the things, by which we are most likely to relapse into cold-heartedness, will be a want of a watchful attention to passing tempers—to the words

which drop from our lips in common conversation—and to those various dispositions which may particularly belong to our constitutional temperament.

The Holy Spirit is frequently grieved when we do not observe it, and withdraws from the soul for a season, as to His comforting testimony, in order to rebuke for something in us which is unlike to Christ, and shew how He will not abide with sin as an associate with Him. I find it necessary to cultivate a momentary guard in these things, and to seek the subjection of every thing which is not of the charity, meekness, and holiness of Christ. It is a miserable thing to live in an uncertain or in a tempestuous state of soul: our object should be that calm, equal, heavenly and established frame which should increase upon us as we advance to the kingdom, or obtain further discoveries of the excellency of Christ. And it is not a privilege confined to Paul to say, "None of these things move me;" but it cannot be ours save as we live by faith, and like Paul are enabled to say, "I am determined to know nothing else but Jesus Christ and him crucified." This decision of the heart ensures a degree of peace in the midst of all the assaults which we endure; and whilst cultivating the sweet graces of the Spirit in the heart, we cannot but have some precious testimony that we are hastening to the world above, where all will be joy and love.

By your last letter, however, though it was but a short one, I gather that the Sun had broken forth again upon you, and, I hope, with healing in His wings! O cherish his blessed return, and hide in the very bottom of your heart that most precious privilege; for you and I both know that there is not in earth or heaven a treasure like this.

My supplications are for you continually; and I humbly trust that the manifest interpositions which

have been made for you ever since you were a child, will not fail you all the wilderness through. The depths of spiritual experience are undoubtedly necessary either for an eminent Christian or an eminent minister. To this I hope the Spirit is leading you by a way in which you will learn many things, and by which you will be a blessing to many in the hand of the Lord. I long for your ministerial service to begin; but "he that believeth doth not make haste;" and the appointed period *will* come in which you will be best prepared for your work, and the people to whom you are sent will be made ready for you. How great is the privilege of saints to have a rest for every anxiety in the best will of God, and with recumbent faith to lean upon the promise that all things shall work together for our good. Apprehending these promises as ours, we *have* all things, and abound; and even here we realize Christ's assurance that we have manifold more in *this* life, as well as in the world to come, life eternal!

Little as we have converse, my heart is with you with a mother's tenderest interest, hearing of your affairs with gratitude to God for his unspeakable mercy towards you, and tracing in his dispensations wonders of faithful grace. I trust Him for you with a cheerful confidence, only be vigilant and vigorous. The glorious prize before you demands every energy of the soul, and the welcome prepared on high for the faithful pilgrim is sufficient to animate. Once to see His face in whom is life and love—once to hear him say, "Well done good and faithful servant," is joy enough. O may we both inherit this blessing when we appear before God!

May all our dear young men at —— be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. I hope, notwithstanding differences of disposition amongst you, that the principle of brotherly love

is strong. Every motive exists to bind you all peculiarly together ; and I pray God to make you keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, by humility and tender-heartedness, each watching for the other in faith and love ! God bless you all, and make you able ministers of the gospel of life. Farewell : let me hear from you soon.

I am ever your most affectionate mother and friend
in our dear Master,

M. S.

XXXV.

Benefit of learning our own Weakness—Deliverance from Temptations—Ardent Desires—Passing through the Red Sea—Sympathy in a Minister—Mutual Communion—Enthusiasm, and its contrary Extreme.

I AM fully aware, my dear ——, that you have been ready to accuse and to reproach me ; and my lengthened silence has seemed to justify an idea that I intended to drop our epistolary correspondence. I take up my pen, however, to convince you of the contrary, and with truth to assure you that although we have had little communion in this form, I have never failed to remember you before Him in whom all things are hidden which can satisfy and best enrich.

My occupations are much too numerous to allow of my forming a good correspondent, and they increase upon me daily. Blessed be our Lord that it is an increase full of precious promise as to the kingdom of Jesus, and that the only regret which can be experienced in such a cause arises from an anxiety to have more strength and time to meet the necessities of each.

It is well for us, however, that a sense of insufficiency is given us; hence we learn experimentally the requirement of greater strength than our own, and the privilege also of leaving the success of undertakings upon the shoulders of Him who hath undertaken the government, and who is able and willing to bear it.

I suppose this is an experience in which you are making progress. It seems to be the prevailing purpose of the Holy Spirit to carry on our state of grace by shewing us our dependance; and whatever tends to bring us closely to the bosom of Jesus, must be of infinite compassion and everlasting love. Is it not wonderful that Christ should so work as even to overrule and sanctify us even through our very falls? This always astonishes me more, I think, than any part of the marvellous scheme of redeeming grace; and whilst it places the crown of glory upon the head of Jesus, fills our mouths with the song of praise which angels themselves could never reach.

I have entered into the nature of your late exercises very sincerely. Many little things have transpired of late which have convinced me of the anxiety and conflict which must have passed through your soul; but out of it all, the Lord hath delivered you; and the assaults of Satan in this and every other instance must return upon his own head with shame and confusion to himself. Blessed will be the time when no more of endurance will exercise the soul.

I hope our heavenly King is riding triumphantly, and carrying on his cause with a prosperity promising the breaking forth of that glorious day, in which souls shall possess a larger degree of spiritual blessedness, and the powers of darkness be more powerfully restrained.

Surely the pouring forth of the Spirit upon sons and daughters is very manifest in our day! And with a

grateful heart I acknowledge His loving-kindness who has remembered our Zion, and called forth so many in the interests of the Saviour, willing to spend and be spent for Him !

The loss of our dear young men has been very greatly felt amongst us ; but perhaps more in the private feelings of those that love them than in the cause itself ; for it appears as if their departure had excited fresh spiritual energy in those who remain who, animated by their example, seem full of holy purpose and settled devotion. Every week also witnesses something more of growing warmth in the flock ; and these impressions, if cherished, as I trust they will be, by the Eternal Spirit, give us the hope that still there is much blessed work to be done here. This prospect animates my faith and courage ; and resting upon the power of our Lord, who is ever faithful to his covenant engagements, my soul is filled with growing desire to be spent in this cause. O may you all be filled by the Shepherd of Israel, and placed in a fold where you may gather his lambs and feed his sheep ! It is a calling, my dear —, which exceeds the privilege of archangels, and which nothing can ever enable us sufficiently to estimate.

I hope your own views of the privilege grow brighter to you ; but no doubt assaults will be made upon your faith and comfort in this respect ;—remember, however, that one preparatory exercise towards the ministry is the passing through the Red Sea of trial, and that most generally we may observe how much the Lord is pleased to prove with deepest waters the disciples in whom he will be most glorified—‘ Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptation, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.’—Luke xxii. 28—30.

When no other consideration is powerful enough to

give us comfort, this is often found sufficient; and like our Lord, we are made willing to encounter all manner of temptation, that we may know the *sympathy* of heart which is needful in such a station. I do not think any minister is likely to be useful who does not possess a tenderness of association, a feeling with those for whom he labours. Without this disposition, it is not likely that confidence will be obtained, or that any proper interest in the progress of the soul will be felt; and although we find that such affections open the way to much more of suffering, yet this is well borne for Jesus' sake, and for his beloved children. May the Lord be pleased to enrich your whole inner man with these dispositions, and make this period of study and trial a sweet season of divine teaching and growing strength in the Lord!

Surely such manifestations of grace as have been dispensed to you are claims upon the surrender and sacrifice of all we have or are; and it is well if we can maintain such a warmth of love to our dying Lord as shall keep us lively in devotional affection and holy zeal. The advantage of this spirit I hope will be great in the little band which are united with you; by mutual communion the flame is kept alive, and new desires are kindled. I think too, from what I have observed of most Christians, that there is amongst many a degree of coldness and formality which is lamentable; and from which, blessed be God, those of our flock have been greatly preserved. The dread of *enthusiasm* seems to be so great, that men are not sufficiently aware of the evil of the other extreme, and in place thereof miserably dishonour the glorious cause by a reserve of feeling which, though not to the extreme of sin, is certainly, in my opinion, by no means the proper character of those who have been snatched from

such a horrible gulph of ruin, visited in such an extraordinary way of grace, bought by so astonishing a price, and made debtors to such an incalculable amount of mercy. O may our God prevent us with his loving-kindness, and ever enable us to maintain the first love of our souls, and the pressing sense of redeeming love upon our hearts !

I hope all your little meetings are conducted in this precious spirit, and then no doubt your hearts will frequently burn within you as he talketh with you by the way. My heart is much and continually with you. —— is a spot upon earth where much of my treasure is found, and much of Christ's treasure, and with every importunate affection towards you, my spirit breathes out its petitions for you, and desires every choicest blessing to be extended from the Lord.

I hope I shall pay you a visit ere long in person also ; but I desire to leave all my anxieties at the feet of Jesus—there they rest in peace !

Let me hear from you, my beloved son. I do not think you should have ceased writing to me ; but, perhaps, I am unreasonable in this thought—we each understand the other's engagements. But let us not in future be so long silent, it cannot be good or expedient in any way ; and multitudes of engagements should not be suffered to interfere with each other.

I have been unusually strengthened for my work lately, as the young men would tell you ; but at present I am very unwell. I believe my confinement so intently to the writing in so many bibles, all of which I have done in a week, is one reason why I labour under sad headaches ; but if this is the reason, a little rest will soon, by God's blessing, restore me.

I shall be very glad to have another letter from you. All your friends are well ; and as to ——, so rapidly

advancing in the kingdom that he is quite a comfort to me, and is a beautiful, decided, and fervent believer—truly such an one as would have adorned the primitive times.

Farewell, I commit you to the Lord, and am as ever,
your very affectionate mother and friend,

M. S.

XXXVI.

Simplicity the Secret of Enjoyment—Increasing Labour through all things—Darkness of the Place visited, and Spiritual Efforts there.

I suppose, my dear —, you will have heard through some other channel that we are at this place (seaside), and will conclude we are still exercised with sickness; indeed nothing would have made me so long in writing, but the pressing avocations which have been thus for some time brought upon me in addition to the usual engagements which I have had. A great variety of interesting scenes have lately been abundant round about me, and I have had great need and plentiful manifestations of the readiness of the present help of our dear and blessed Redeemer. * * * * *

Looking through present things we learn to esteem apparent affliction to be a real blessing, and to feel and to acknowledge the power of the Psalmist's experience, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.”

Surely our inheritance *on this side* the grave exceedeth the understanding of the carnal mind, and this spiritual baptism is indeed life and peace. Indeed I wish for no other possession than to know the love of Christ, and every day's exercise doth but more powerfully resolve me into the simplicity of expectation and

desire. Here is the secret of all real enjoyment. Until we are brought to this, how are we tossed to and fro—with what anxieties and fruitless cares is the bosom harassed from day to day;—but once anchoring sincerely in Jesus for all, then, even in the midst of assaults, conflicts, and abasement, there is a quietness and assurance for ever, of which the scripture speaks. I rejoice, my friend, that it is your ambition to be brought to this mind more and more. For this end my soul has been struggling ever since I knew anything of the Lord, and I think I discover in you a training in those steps, and experience through which I have past. I think too that you will have to suffer from the same quarter for an overflowing tenderness of heart and distress in giving others pain, will always more or less expose to a degree of inward temptation and affliction of soul. 'Tis indeed very painful to have to strike upon those things in others which must cause them deepest grief, when at the same time, perhaps, they are filled with mistaken apprehensions of your motives and conduct; nevertheless, may none of these things move us, but a steady persevering labour of love through all kinds of sufferings and trials, evidence that the will and interests of Jesus are preferable with us to all private and selfish feelings, and simplicity and dependence upon Him for the event cheer and support our souls whatever we go through! Our Master is neither deceived nor changeable, and the time cometh when tears shall be wiped away and sorrows shall be known no more.

I was, as you well understood, very sorry to leave the dear flock, especially at present, for we have had such a mercifully uninterrupted course of meetings, &c., as have given great life, establishment, and animation in the fold. There has been lately a great revival amongst

us, and it grieved me to be taken away ; but so blind are we that probably withdrawalment for a season may tend to confirm rather than to shake, and the flock by this very means may be put upon still greater exertion. We have many interesting sick, too, at present, in the town, and great opportunities for work to any whose hearts may move them to unite in the cause—and thanks be to God many come forward in various ways, and helpers in the vineyard are continually raised up.

* * * * * I am the less anxious as I know I am in the path of duty, for my sister could not properly be left in her present state ; and the Lord has been pleased to open for me a great opportunity in this truly dark and benighted place. Perhaps no heathen world can need more entirely the gospel light—ignorance covers the most part of the people, and mad enthusiasm a few. Yet there is a great spirit of enquiry and much distress expressed at the want of means. Lately a minister in the neighbourhood has come over to preach to them at six on Sunday evening in the school-room ; but I know not what his views are. We went last Sunday, and had another person, whose whole discourse was without any *foundation*—not once was the name of Jesus mentioned or alluded to, except the formal conclusion “through Jesus Christ,” &c. ; and yet the subject was upon the necessity of preparing for death, and rules how we should prepare. Surely of all other occasions this is the one when a necessity of *Jesus* will be felt ! How to pass through that otherwise dark valley—how to stand before that otherwise most dreadful presence—I know not !

And what must become of a poor sinner who really feels the solemn importance of entering into that world, without a refuge to flee to or a shelter in a Saviour’s wounds !

Blessed be God for having taught us, my b elcve

friend, a different view—and, oh, may He shine on these poor people and grant them the rising of the sun of righteousness among them!

Maria and I have opened a school for the time we stay, and have about a hundred and thirty young people, some of them quite grown up; we have them from six to eight o'clock in the evening, and on Sundays at ten and three. They are exceedingly attentive, and a few of them seem really to feel the truths they are taught.

But O how such examples hold up to us, as in a mirror, what we once were before the light of life was given us, and tend to raise our adoring praise to that free and sovereign grace into which we must resolve the whole of our salvation from first to last! May we never forget the hole of the pit from whence we are digged, or lose the lively sense of compassions unspeakable.

There is nothing more affecting to behold than that evident propensity amongst the saints to rest too much satisfied, without that degree of nearness to Christ which is promised to the diligent soul, and which no doubt is attainable.

'Tis not enough that we *have* the hidden life, or that we maintain some tolerable evidence thereof; the vigorous energy of this divine life should put forth all its precious fruits; and we ought not to rest satisfied with anything whilst in this our growing state—but rather daily forget the things which are behind, and press forward.

How are you, my dear friend, in this respect? Are you wrestling for more and more, as a hungry child? Are you striving after increased solidity of experience and endearment of fellowship? I trust you are obedient to that abundant willingness which the Lord has shewed to you, and are laying up treasure which fadeth not away.

I long to see you, and wait the approach of August with a glad heart. 'Tis a long time since we had personal fellowship, and I hope we shall have much to say of the things we have learnt since that time. It will be a refreshing season, I doubt not, to us all. Loving hearts await to welcome you with truest affection. You are often the subject of our converse; and the way in which our Lord has dealt with you has been a great excitement to the faith of many. But indeed it is always thus. The mercies of Christ to any individual rest not merely on that person, but, being a member of a body, is diffused throughout the church, and spreads edification and life to all.

For this, amongst other reasons, is the communion of saints so much a duty and a privilege, by which we may administer to each other the benefit of those experiences which are given unto us as into a spiritual treasury for the church. If we were more impressed with this, our charity and our courage would increase, seeing that we are guilty of a great sin in holding back any of those gifts, which are bestowed upon us not merely for private good but for public use.

I hope you may have heard from —— lately, and that all tidings from that quarter have already reached you. I know every little thing which happens with us is interesting to you, and I often wish I had more time to write to you; yet am I sure that your heart can rejoice when any deprivation to yourself is on account of increased opportunities for working in the harvest-field. May the Holy Spirit increase this disposition in you, and fill you with every communication that is needful both as a saint and a minister.

Farewell. May all the mercies of Jesus be yours. I am your affectionately attached mother and friend,

M. S.

XXXVII.

Earnest Desire to afford Comfort.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND,

I NEED not attempt to tell you my heart's emotion on the receipt of yours. My first impulse not only bore me quickly to you in my spirit, but filled me with earnest longings to be transported to you in body likewise. This desire remains with me still, and I have turned over the consideration in every form in which it might be possible to leave home. Insurmountable hindrances have risen before me as mountains of separation. It afflicts me that I cannot now be by your bed-side and the side of my friend. Precious soul! O may Jesus shew her his love and his sufficiency. My sister says, perhaps it is in mercy I am prevented, for the sight of me might be too much for her present frame of body and mind; but surely she will listen to words sent to her in this little messenger. I will address her again in part of this letter, and leave it to your judgment whether and when to read it to her; perhaps she will be willing to listen to little sentences at once.

To you, my dear friend, I write with an open heart. The strong arm of our souls' beloved can never sink, therefore we shall not sink; we are upheld by omnipotence in covenant, and strength is equal to the day. Pray write me a line, and let me have constant communications, that may inform me how you are circumstanced. Farewell, dearest friends.

I am, in tenderest sympathy, yours,

M. S.

XXXVIII.

Short Addresses to the Afflicted One.

MY DARLING FRIEND,

COME listen to her from whom you have been wont to say the Comforter has sent you messages of love. The Comforter cannot change. You are ill in *body* and have been overdone¹ by passing events. It is not the hidings of the Lord, but the oppression attendant upon disease that is the cause of your sadness. Do not mistake; the cloud has the bow in it. O turn your eye, see, it is *emerald*, and the covenant-green shall revive your soul.

You used to take me as sent of God to you—take me so now. Be the same blessing given as on a former occasion, when first the Lord brought us together. Returned *sin*—even if that were the true cause of your darkness, must never be raised up in our judgment, so as to appear greater than our Great One! The word is gone out of his mouth. “The blood of Jesus cleanseth from *all sin*.” “I will not remember thy sin.” “Cast thy burden upon the Lord.” “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect?”

My precious, loved friend, O come with me to Jesus’ heart; hide your heart in his heart. Let us please him, by believing there is no limit to his love or power in our behalf.

I am sure you will have your bonds broken, but I want you to use your faith, however small, at present; surely you are taught by the man with the *withered* hand. Do as he did. Jesus will bless the obedience, and we are to try to do what he bids us. Remember, love, this is his great command—“*Only believe.*” Now

I hope to hear that you accept me from Jesus, and will accompany me, as in times past, in the sweet paths that we have trod together. Our own Lord rules well and wisely; do not be tempted to take the burden upon yourself; Jesus will bear it, and will take it from you. I want very much to see a line from your own dear hand. O what gladness it would put into my heart, and I know you delight to make me happy. Can't you just take a pen and say—Yes, dear friend, we both live by Jesus. Soon we shall say so in highest strains, and it is blessed to say so here below. God bless you, love, you live in my heart, and I am sure you live in Christ's.

I am yours in faithful affection,

M. S.

XXXIX.

Words of Consolation.

MY PRECIOUS FRIEND,
WITH tenderest sympathy I carry you in my heart and mind. May you feel also, in sweetly sustaining assurance, that the breast-plate of our great High Priest bears your name inscribed thereon, so that you rest in the love and faithfulness of him from whom effectual sympathy is given.

I did not know of your trial until, by looking on the token around the last letter, I surmised that the hand of the Lord had been put forth, and, on opening it, had my supposition confirmed. I trust you will see the blest promise fulfilled in power, and that although affliction bows the natural spirit, divine consolation will revive and animate the new man.

No doubt is entertained in your mind or in mine, respecting the *wisdom* that regulates all our affairs; and when we know ourselves to be encompassed likewise by the bow of the covenant, we are sure that *love* prevails for us and will sanctify every sorrow. The Lord Jesus comfort you! This he can readily do, and by one of his invincible acts deliver out of "the mire," and set the feet upon "a Rock." So standing, we may see and hear the mighty waters rise and dash around us, and yet stand firm. "The waters shall not overflow thee." "Hitherto shall ye come and no further." "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Precious, blessed words, made ours through faith!

The Lord increase our faith more and more. And what can I ask for you, beloved friend, more than this? Surely I would desire and ask *every* best blessing by which your dear soul may be revived!

It is only, beloved friend, 'SEEM to be drowning'—I quote your own words. The soul that trusts the Lord will not sink; the cry that falls on his ear brings forth his outstretched arm, and succour such as is needed, in kind and degree, is assuredly given.

Be not too anxious on this point, my beloved. You know you are not strong *by* the faith, but *through* the faith. It is not the power of the grace, but the might of *him* in whom the grace acteth which gives the security. Therefore, if but as a grain of mustard-seed rightly directed, it will bring forth the manifestation of the covenant love and life, just as it is needed.

Remember, yours is a tabernacle tried by nervous debility, and in consequence yours are trials of this description; but the Lord, who looks on the upright principle, and delights himself in the expressions of an earnest, holy will, looks upon your inward existence with complacent joy, and doth raise you to the highest

elevation attainable by the creature—that is, to the bosom of his own love !

I do bear you in my *prayerful* heart—I believe likewise that you will unite with me in the song of praise, surely hereafter—surely *here*. Oh how much has he done for us in a Father's love ! how much will he still do for us in all the fulness of his promise in Christ !

I know your loving heart will not be content without a few words respecting *our* ways. We have been very much called upon since Christmas, and you know it is a season wherein we have many of our institutions, &c. &c. to look after—many of our annual little meetings with our young people also ; and in addition I am now engaged in forming a new work, which appears to be needed, and on which let us implore a blessing.

Farewell, my beloved friend ; you know how dear you and yours are to my heart. Let me hear how you all are.

I am yours, in Jesus' precious name and love,

M. S.

XL.

Sickness—Power of the Spirit in Extremity—What shall I render ?—Publications.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I KNOW you will have the same heart towards me as ever, and therefore my pen is taken up to tell you something about our way and work ; and truly would it refresh my spirit in the midst of the journey were you to give me the sight of your handwriting again. I wait patiently, however, believing that in due time you will

begin to say within yourself, ‘ how I will comfort my friend.’

I should have written some weeks ago, but our Lord has been appointing me different engagements in the sickness of my beloved sister, who has been a great invalid after an attack of a very serious nature: but our thanksgivings abound for the mercy which has spared her to us a little longer, and has also given her back to us with every energy of mind unimpaired, and without any injury to the body; which, owing to the nature of the visitation, we had reason to be prepared for. She is, however, very weak, and only able to go *slowly*, leaning upon me or upon a friendly stay.

I am now, however, able to leave her, which in respect of my work in the vineyard is a great blessing, more especially in this busy season.

How blessed is the experience of the soul when in times of apparent extremity the spirit comes with power adapted to the day. So it was with the dear one, who when falling breathed out the words “ blood,” and “ righteousness,” and as she now tells us, felt at that moment that she should pass into eternity *so dressed*. And this is not her privilege only, my beloved friend! What is our hope but this provision? And what need we more! The blood, has the availing virtue which cancels every debt and cleanses from ALL sin. The righteousness, possesses inexhaustible fulness quite ample enough to wrap up every believing soul and present it faultless before the throne.

These are precious facts, my beloved. O let us give glory to the Lord by believing them ours, and *accept* what is so freely given. Such covenanted provision is calculated to give peace—and if we desire to give pleasure in return, we cannot better succeed than by receiving the gift. How David knew this when he said,

"What shall I render," &c., and answered, "I will receive the cup of salvation!"

Your consolation, my precious friend, will ere long abound in the cheerful appropriation of the fulness of the covenant. And although you are I know sometimes pressed down, I know that you must be lifted up; because however low you are pressed, the everlasting arms are still underneath—Is it not so? Yes, you answer, else I should not now live to call upon his name!

I have been publishing a little book, and so has my sister. I think my own little book might speak some words to your heart, as the Lord has caused us many times to meet in this way. I was requested to give my views on the points in question, and should have endeavoured to do so before, but found no time. I know you will all read it, and that through it we shall talk with each other; and oh! far better, talk with our Friend, in whom such matchless riches are treasured up for hearts that love Him.

My precious one, lift up your eyes to the sacrifice; bring your disease beneath the droppings of the blood, doubt not the readiness with which it drops on you—remember His words, "*Only believe,*" and the acceptable prayer, "*Help thou mine unbelief.*"

The Lord bless you. I do not tire your attention with a long letter; but my heart is full of love to you, and all yours also, who live in my affection with truest bonds.

Farewell. God give you heart's-ease *in the heart of Jesus*, to which he invites and draws the weary.

Ever yours in the dear love of Jesus.

M. S.

XLI.

*Token and Pledge of the Lord's Indwelling—His Blessing on Care of his Lambs
—Thankful Heart.*

WELL I remember, my precious, how you have welcomed *a few lines* from me, and under the influence of this sweet confidence I send a few.

Yours were heart-cheering to me, and with tears of love I accepted them as a gracious answer to our prayers in your behalf. Blessed be the Lord for His abundant compassion, and for the grace which enables us to receive them with some measure of understanding!

I find it difficult to express my feelings on this occasion, expression does not sufficiently exhibit them; but you have a heart and mind that can comprehend by sympathy what I cannot tell. May the full blessing of peace be sent down upon your head, in baptism of the Dove, and the wings of the Dove bear you up into the Eden of the covenant-presence where weary souls find rest, and where *your* heaven is! O my friend, what unspeakable riches of grace have already been bestowed in the single act by which we have been enabled so, in truth, to speak. Surely we know how entirely destitute we are of any such affections, until the dear beam from on high is directed upon the icy region of the heart; and the consciousness we have of the warm, or the animated, affection of our soul towards the Lord, is a token of His indwelling, and a pledge of more. Is it not so, my beloved?

I only * * * * *

Here, beloved friend, I was called away, and I have carried my unfinished letter from Stonefall to Knaresborough, and back again continually, intending to add somewhat

more out of my heart, and been arrested at each place by successive demands upon me. Does it appear inconceivable that I should be so occupied? I feel ashamed of speaking it, because unless my *domestic* engagements be considered it would look like an exaggerated view of things; but my own friend can enter into all my concerns, and to you I speak freely.

We have had much sickness in our town, and our own household too has been visited in measure. Our eldest little girl is delicate and requires attention. These dear children are opening out with much interest to us—we know not to what service these objects of care may be appointed in the intention of the Lord, and great is our privilege if bid to bring up one such little child for the Lord. *You* have a little charge, my dear one; *you* receive the little ones in Jesus's name, and in so doing receive Him. The showers of divine blessing will come down upon you, and the drops of life-giving love fall on your own soul. I know of no engagement wherein the promise is more truly verified, "He that watereth shall be watered." The act is refreshing, and the Spirit of refreshment from on high doubles the enjoyment by immediate impartations of grace.

It is right to speak these things to the praise of our dear Lord. He loves to hearken to our testimony, and to behold us in possession of a thankful heart; and surely the bounty of His hand demands the return of love and praise. O that our affections were always prepared to yield to such a touch, and to respond in the strains that so well become the saint, for it becometh them "to be thankful."

O God! give us more of the spirit of praise that we may exchange the spirit of heaviness for that of joy, and break forth with songs of exulting confidence in thee! It is from our Jesus, our Lord, that this anointing is

had been the face of an angel." I know we find it difficult, while laden with care and covered with a cloud, thus to look forth "fair as the moon;" but let us strive and break away from clouds, that so our Lord may be admired in us. This is a powerful motive, and sometimes puts us upon efforts which, were self alone concerned, we could not make.

I want another letter from your dear hand. Can you not write to me: I want to hear from yourself your present state of feeling, and whether you are able, not only as you have done during all your late indisposition, to give glory to God as doing righteously in all He does, but also to say and feel that He is doing *lovingly* to *you*, my dear one, in all He does. And tell me how those little dear lambs are advancing, towards whom God has opened your heart. Those children, perhaps, will rejoice in eternity through these days of your affliction, and the seed you are sowing in the midst of your own deep waters may spring up, and bear plenteous fruit. How cheering it is thus to anticipate how we shall take a retrospective view of the scenes we are now passing through, when from the heights of the kingdom above we look back upon them;—then every part of the Lord's dispensations will appear in their excellence, and we shall be amazed at the slowness of our minds in understanding them!

We have all been kept to the house the last two weeks by severe colds; mine is now yielding, and I hope to get down to-morrow to some of my engagements. I love to have your prayerful recollection of me in such moments, and therefore I always tell you of any change. Be with me, my beloved friend. I am at present contemplating the offices of the blessed Holy Ghost; they are refreshing subjects to my own soul; and it is specially delightful to testify of Him in a way wherein you must

be sensible of such an immediate *dependence* upon Him. May He be the dove, and as the comforter to you, my beloved friend, and bear the olive-branch to your breast.

May the Lord's blessing be with you all. I trust to meet you all around the Throne in the Heaven of heavens, rejoicing in the banqueting-house beneath the gloriously unfurled banner, *Love*.

I commend you, love, to Jesus; and am in tenderest bonds your faithfully affectionate friend,

M. S.

XLIII.

*Influenza—The Omnipotent Shoulder—Breast-plate—Value of a thankful Spirit
—Spectacle to Angels—Death of a Disciple.*

MY PRECIOUS FRIEND,

MY heart is as desirous to receive some tidings from you as I am sure yours will be respecting me and mine; for whatever may be the situation or circumstances attending us in this vale of tears, we possess the consciousness of union and communion in the Spirit along with the tender sympathy which makes all our interests one in the Lord.

You would have heard from me long since had I not been so confined by sickness. The prevailing influenza has much affected our town; and our own household has been visited—first in three of our servants very seriously ill, next my dear sister; and after having been wonderfully held up myself as an attendant upon others, now I am called to the same kind of suffering, but comparatively mild, although I am much debilitated, and have been unfitted for writing.

My thoughts have been daily with you, my beloved friend; and my prayer rises to Him in whose loving disposal is our life and our all, believing that He will dispose all that concerns us in power and to peace. It is our privilege thus to repose in His government without being *careful*;—and indeed what need is there for care when an Omnipotent shoulder bears up the weight of the kingdom, and in so doing the burden also of every redeemed individual of that kingdom. There is a breast-plate too, and names engraven there; and they who are so impressed upon the heart of our Great High Priest, must needs be safe. Had we this exercise of faith in more habitual liveliness, such blessed truths would cheer us in the darkest night, and amidst the hours most dreary would speak forth enlivening sounds of love. My beloved friend knows all this, and has tasted the grace and the peace; and *now I trust is tasting*, if not *drinking*, the sweetness of the covenant unchangeableness of our Almighty Friend.

It is indeed a cause of unutterable thankfulness when we are permitted to partake largely of such impartations. But let us not despise the day of small things, nor sink below a spirit of praise and gratitude, because the cup may not run over. The Lord delights in a thankful spirit; and blessed be His name that by the work of His power within us this spirit is not dependant upon *joys*; for we can thank him for and under the *Cross*, and offer Him praise even whilst He is trying us in the fire. This has been peculiarly *your* privilege, my friend; for in your most disconsolate moments, and when you have least had the ability to utter a song of joy, you have been enabled to say, “Blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Surely this is one of the most conclusive marks of a supernatural life within us, for Nature speaks no such

language ; *it* is a complainer, a murmurer, and many times would fain be heard above the new creature in us ; but it doth not prevail, for the indwelling Holy Ghost maintains the disposition of childlike submission, and with it of *gratitude* for mercies undeserved.

I hope you are better in health, my precious friend ; but I *fear* also, because the time and season are so trying to us all ; and perhaps it may be especially so to you who are already so weakened by sickness and exhaustion. I believe that a restoration of your nervous system will be very productive of restoration to the hidden enjoyments of the life of faith ; and I pray the Lord to grant it ; but if otherwise, be thankful, love, that through all your trial you have been kept from uttering any hard word against the Lord, and thus have given glory to Him. To angels we are spectacles. May they behold the developement of the divine life in us, give honour to God, and see in us the *wonderful* results of the finished work of their Lord and *ours*,—ours by such tender, such peculiar bonds. This time of sickness in our place affords opportunity for the word of comfort and exhortation, and likewise for the manifestation of the power of faith and love in some who suffer.

It was an interesting scene a little while since in a cottage where one of my dear children in Christ lay overpowered by fever, and apparently quite without the true exercise of the mind ; when without exactly discerning who were present, he turned to me, and said, “ O bid them sing to me, ‘ At anchor laid, remote from home ; longing I cry, sweet Spirit come.’ ” His sister joined us in a low tone merely to satisfy him ; and a flood of tears was followed by a return of reason, and this return with short and emphatic sentences testifying of the presence of the Lord, and of the breathing of his soul after the fruition of His presence on high. O how

true is the word of promise, “ I will make thy bed in thy sickness !”

Farewell, my ever dear friend. I have written as much as at present I am able. My tender affection is with you all, and my prayer that all may know the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings, and be made partakers of the power of his resurrection.

To you, love, my heart goes out with special sympathy. The Lord bless, keep and comfort you evermore.

Believe me yours in His eternal love,

M. S.

XLIV.

Indisposition—Honey from the Rock—Sympathy of Mind and Body—The Truth immovable.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

Possibly our circumstances have been in some respects alike during the last weeks. So much sickness prevails everywhere that we may reasonably conclude the hand of the Lord to be felt in the visitation in every house ; and as there is in this world one event to all, Jesus’ people are included in the dispensation of trial : yet, blessed be his name, blood-sprinkled souls escape all the wrath in their sickness, and they suffer only that they may be made white and purified,—so different is it when the secret of the Lord is known and applied, and so faithful is he to remember his covenant and the oath which he sware.

I have been very ill, my beloved friend, in respect of the mortal part, and am still in bed, from which I am now addressing you. Had it not been for this, I should

have written long since ; but my indisposition has laid me up under severe head-aches, rendering writing painful and prohibited. This has been accompanied with loss of my voice for some time, and a threatened affection of the lungs. Perhaps I was not quite prudent in venturing out from my sick room, after the influenza, before the extreme debility consequent upon that complaint was gone. I was not strong enough to resist the pinching cold, and was soon after laid up again by a relapse and other painful parts of illness. Thus we speak of second causes, but with our eyes fixed upon the Great First Cause, from whom all the visitations that affect the mystical body are sent forth !

I have had you, my beloved friend, very intimately associated with me during this confinement. We are brought near in a sympathetic sense of our union, when we are each under affliction ; and I trust we are bearing each other before Him whose sympathies are unbounded, and whose power is equal to his sympathy. We never can sufficiently dwell upon and search into that Bible testimony which declares of our own Lord that he is *able* and *willing* to save to the *uttermost*. Such words, spoken by such a witness, should banish doubt and awaken full expectation ; and were it an engagement made by the creature according to a creature's limited ability, we should have no hesitation in throwing ourselves fully upon the truth and tenderness of friendship,—strange therefore and faulty is our unbelief, but He is pitiful and gracious, and remembereth *whereof* we are made ! Let us, however, my beloved friend, taste this sweet honey from our strong Rock, and learn to address our own souls with a charge on Jesus' behalf, saying, “ Hope thou in God.”

I trust I shall be cheered soon by another letter from your pen. Your depression, my precious one, arises

out of the infirmity of the tabernacle in which you dwell ; whilst it is debilitated, I fear your mind will partake of the suffering ; there is so intimate a sympathy between body and mind, particularly in some constitutions ; but when the warmer weather may come, with it I hope the inward beams of our covenant sun will be shot forth, and the reviving or healing operation of his presence restore to you the measure of spiritual rejoicing you once had. This would be a great blessing to you and to all who dearly love you ; but *the* blessing remains unclouded, unbroken ; names once written in the book of life are never there erased, and He who has loved, and loves from first to last, for His own name's sake, always has that same motive before him in its eternal freshness and power. This, my precious friend, is our stronghold, and out of it no power shall be able to cast us. The comfort may be, for wise reasons, allowed to be interrupted, but the truth itself is immoveable.

We have all been in sickness, but very mercifully dealt with—the bodily trial severe, but divine mercies abounding. Thus we are reminded of our dependant condition.

In my heart, my love, there is no choice to live or die ; my dear Lord will do the best—and if living, I am thankful because of the many dear young ones to whom my presence here seems good ; but we leave all this to him whose counsels are wisdom and love—he is a Shepherd who will not lose one sheep or lamb ; and we may be at peace !

The Lord overshadow you, my beloved sufferer, and make his goodness to pass before you.

Ever believe me, your tenderly-attached friend,

M. S.

for you—this is my trust in Him ! O then let us all in your behalf shew that patience has its perfect work, and disappoint the enemy whose malicious desire is to move us to complain. No doubt before the angels, Christ is magnified for you, and the bitterness that has been in your cup, having been drank by you with lowly acceptance, will turn for a testimony to the power of the Saviour's grace, and so you will be satisfied.

I believe you will give your hearty amen to this.

I rejoice in the amendment of health of which you speak, may the Lord confirm and increase it ! The strengthening of the mortal tabernacle will, I trust, be accompanied with *all* good, and you will be raised up that your voice also may be exalted in the Saviour's praise !

I am very much interested about the little children that form your class. Will you tell me something about them in your next. It is a present to the Lord which will be precious in His sight who said, " Lovest thou me, feed my lambs." And they will be growing up, I trust, to be a witness to you of the strength that He has perfected in weakness. Go on then, beloved friend, abiding beneath the sheltering presence of this unwearied keeper. And O that we may ere long rest together beneath the fulness of His uplifted countenance ! Will you excuse this writing—I have a sprained wrist, and form my letters with difficulty as you will perceive ; but I know you will welcome the messenger in love.

Farewell, may peace and reliance be strong in your soul. The resting-place is strong. May we have a due proportion of holy boldness in using it for our souls !

I am ever your tenderly attached,

M. S.

XLVI.

Keep Home in sight—Seasons of Retirement refreshing—Valued Ministration of Rev. P. R.

I BELIEVE, my beloved friend, that I have not sent you any reply to the last dear letter your hand addressed to me, and I now affectionately devote the present opportunity to this sweet employ. You do not write to me so frequently as formerly, but of this, my beloved, I do not complain, for I am well persuaded you write when you feel it a relief so to do, and that, writing or otherwise, your heart still speaks in its wonted tone. Sounds such as these can never decay; when one same eternal Spirit resides in each, there must needs be the interchange of spiritual sympathy and lasting affection.

How precious is the recollection that we are rapidly closing the time of separation and of trial! And how dear the thought that speedily our Lord will gather His ripened fruit, and place us in the abode, where, with an interchange of the highest delights of which the blood bought soul is capable, we shall meet for ever! And O how powerfully do such assurances help us to live above the comparatively small inconveniences we suffer now.

I endeavour to keep home in sight; this has a wonderful effect upon my spirit in its daily appointed exercise, and I find the Lord graciously acknowledging this effect of faith, not only in granting what it seeks of realizing nearness to Himself, but in giving to faith, out of the objects beheld in the house, new motives for desire and longing after its rest.

It has pleased Him to grant me a present season of retirement, such as frequently succeeds the full occupation of summer. Usually I have some little confine-

ment by ailments of body when the autumn sets in, and I have not been well during the last month—the last *week* I have been shut up in my room, and I am still suffering a measure of pain, yet it is a season of rest and refreshment. There are intervals when pain is not acute, and when leisure is allowed for sweetest meditations. The midnight hours especially are precious, as laden with the blessings of the covenant borne by the Comforter from the bosom of love into the bosom of need. O may we increase, my loved friend, in the waiting patience of an expectant faith; and we shall find the expectation, resting upon the promise, will receive the blessing to which it has been Jesus's purpose to pledge himself.

Since I last wrote to you we have had many mercies extended to our family and the flock. In respect of the ministry we have been remembered of the Shepherd. Our dear friend Mr. R. tarried with us longer than we anticipated, owing to the illness of his wife, and his labour amongst us was refreshing, and was peculiarly to be valued, because it afforded occasion for exhibiting the features of the times to a people too ready to credit the plausible reasonings which would induce them to suppose the adversary *changed* in his measure of foul apostasy from Christ, and consequently less to be feared. He could speak from personal acquaintance with facts, and did so with much boldness—surely the Lord has a remnant in this town precious in His sight! I behold, with wonder and praise, the long-suffering goodness that He has extended so many years, in the midst of so much provocation and unworthy steps trodden even by us all in the midst of our privileges and blessings! And tracing up these never-failing streams to their glorious source, I do indeed, my precious friend, rejoice in the doctrine of the Sovereign and the unchanging purpose

of the Lord; as affording not only glory to the divine name, but unspeakable comfort to the weary and convinced soul. Oh, surely, we shall confess that we have made a trial of the strength of that love on which we lean—could it have failed beneath us we must have fallen irrecoverably! But His strength is omnipotent and His purpose invariable. How blessed are we, upheld in such encircling arms, and along with this security *folded* too to the breast of eternal love!

How is it, my friend, with all of you? ‘Is it well?’ You will answer, ‘All is well.’ God has subdued your hearts and moulded them into the meek acceptance of His will. But I long to hear of you, and how you may be in health, both of body and soul, at this period of your journey. The Lord bless and cherish you all.

As soon as I am better I shall, if the Lord permit, be busy with my boys for their Christmas examination and its attendant concerns. Think of and pray for us, my beloved friend, that so long as we are privileged to live and labour, the increase may be graciously given.

God bless you, my ever-loved friend, I pray for and hold you in my heart, and am ever

Your tenderly affectionate M. S.

XLVII.

To a young Friend on a providential Opening towards the Ministry—Rejoicing in the Lord—Study of Languages.

I TRULY rejoice, my dear ——, in the merciful interpositions which you experience from our faithful Lord. I cannot say that my mind was exercised with anxiety during the trial which seemed to overhang your pros-

pects, for faith privileges the children of God to rest their weight upon the eternal promise which has engaged for their establishment. We have evidences daily crowding upon us of Jesus Christ's fulfilled engagement, "Fear not, I am with thee."

I remember how when we first talked over the probability of your entering upon the ministry, as you sat by my sick-bed, we agreed upon the sure direction of our guide, and mutually expressed the sentiment, that if indeed so great a calling was to be given you, the Lord would make the way plain and clear—hath He not done it, my beloved friend? and shone with such bright beams of grace and love upon your path that you cannot but say, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me." May He ever help you and be your overshadowing defence to the end of your journey home!

How do you feel your soul under these visitations? Surely it should be like a watered garden, and the voice of the Dove heard therein, for I think when we clearly discern the loving arm of our Lord made bare for us, every grief is gone, and assurance, peace, and joy burst forth within us!

But we know it is not always when *reason* for rejoicing exists that we *do* rejoice. Alas! we carry within us a wretched degree of insensibility, and our stupid hearts are hard to move. May we only bring them by faith to the beams of Jesus's countenance, 'tis only such rays that can melt the ice; and but from Him, the fountain of spiritual life, that any true heat can be obtained. Here then, my dear —, lies our true interest, to keep close to our God; and, whatever may be the passing frame of feeling under which we suffer, to bear in mind that help is laid upon One that is mighty, and that in Him alone is succour or support. These reflections are deepened within my heart, as I

advance to the hill above. Nothing in the wilderness affords any real foundation of rest. Here and there we pluck a rose, perhaps, but thorns encompass it, and it withers whilst we are feeding upon its sweetness; yet there is one rose to be found; even in the desert the rose of Sharon can be plucked where sweetness, beauty, and life are ever new. How sad is it, my friend, that any mistaken souls should be content with any flower short of this! But the truth is, 'tis the secret of the Lord by which the saints are privileged and blest, and neither form nor comeliness can be discoverable in Jesus Christ to any whose eyes and appetites have not been changed by sovereign grace. This calls forth a tribute of praise to the Eternal Giver of the blessing. For why are we made to differ? why do we carry this plant in our bosom? why experience its healing and refreshing beauty? O 'tis all because He hath said, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy!"

I hope the indwelling Comforter is your constant companion, and that He is unfolding to you more of the mystery of godliness in Christ Jesus the further you go in your way. Cultivate His precious manifestations, and seek to raise up your soul in instant freedom at the throne of grace, stirring up the spiritual gift that is in you. Nothing can be more likely naturally to deaden the fervour of heavenly affections, than the dry study of languages and the mixture of heathen sentiment that is inseparable from authors of the description which it seems requisite for you to peruse. A double portion of vigilance must be necessary in such circumstances, and particularly with you, to whom much success and prosperity is vouchsafed. It is a harder matter to bear well a smiling prospect, and the admiration and love of those around us, than to keep a good frame in the furnace. And many a child of God has had reason to wish

himself again in the wilderness where Christ spake comfortably to him, when he experiences the deadening influence of circumstances in which others perhaps may be ready to envy him.

What is *true* prosperity but that of increase in the hidden life? If all things smile about us, and yet within the cry is, "my leanness, my leanness,"—O what advantageth it us?

Not, my dear —, that I suspect this to be your case. I am persuaded better things of you though I thus speak; yet the caution of holy fear is always well for a Christian to be vigilant in, lest, whilst unawares, we may find we are set in slippery places. May we all advance in all knowledge and in all conformity to the image of our God, and be diligent in cultivating "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report," as well as the internal discoveries upon which we may feed!

— is fast approaching (so far as we can judge) to the everlasting world. I hope she is ready for the call. Previously to the sickness, she had evidenced much increase of earnestness for the means of grace, and had often expressed some sentiments which shewed that the sense of sin pressed upon her heart. This I am glad to recal to my mind, particularly as at present all her desires are towards the kingdom, and she frequently repeats, "It is far better to depart and to be with Christ," laying a particular emphasis upon, "*and be with Christ*," at which time she sweetly smiles. She says it will be a grief to her if she is not now to depart, though she resigns it to the Lord. I have not seen so much of her as I desire, my engagements are exceedingly multiplied, as you will have heard, from the present state of my flock; but this would not prevent me, were I in any tolerable health. I am, however, far from being able to do much, and the last week have been

wholly confined. These seasons I will hope are granted in love, drawing me aside awhile from occupation, and enabling me to anticipate and realize the departing hour. O when it comes, may a holy readiness be found, and the uplifted gates of heaven open, and give an abundant entrance to eternal glory! There the family of Christ shall meet to part no more, and conflicting scenes be exchanged for the pure river of the waters of life, where no winds or storms disturb its settled calm. Should it be thought right for you to come down, I shall be very glad to have the opportunity of communion once more on this side the grave, and O may we have much to tell of the loving kindness of our God.

— makes rapid advances—his settled devotion and lively zeal are truly estimable, and I admire the Spirit's power in giving him such a sense of sin and view of his own vileness, which perhaps naturally speaking might have been less expected from the tenor of his life; but when God the Holy Ghost is at work He bringeth down every high imagination, and exalteth upon the ruins of self the crucified King of Israel.

May that King bless and keep you, my dear —, and comfort you in his own fulness.

Give my affectionate love to the dear family. We sent a parcel a few days since; I was then extremely ill, or would have sent more letters.

I hope you will let me hear from you soon. With the united love of all here, believe me, my dear —, your truly affectionate mother and friend in Christ,

M. S.

XLVIII.

Early Entanglements—University Snares—Mission—Communion of Saints.

MY DEAR ——,

I AM glad of the opportunity now that all are retired to bed, to take up my pen to address you. I intended this day to be principally dedicated to —— ; but how little can we reckon upon anything of futurity. One of our servants was seized with sudden and violent agony, and has been ill in great excess of suffering so as to confine me all the morning, and I have been sent for with an importunity which I could not resist, to visit a person in great danger,—and here I am to-night, without any prepared packet !

I cannot say how much I was gratified by your letter to me. The decision with which you have acted in the interesting concern upon which we conversed, has been consistent with the character of a child of God. To be convinced of our duty in the clear light of our God's mind towards us, and in consequence to embrace it with the determination of holy integrity, is surely a feature which belongs to God's own family ; and were it more conspicuous, would preserve us in a much greater degree of peace than is generally possessed. I am persuaded that a flow of spiritual joy in the witness of the Holy Ghost will ever attend an upright course, and that the Holy Ghost delighteth in this prosperity of his servant. May He ever stimulate your heart in the simplicity of faith ! It may cost us much when we are called to sacrifice self and self-reasoning to the will of our Lord ; but it is a glorious endurance, ending in such enrichment of soul as amply repays for all we may suffer in the furnace.

Early entanglements are dangerous things to tamper with ; misery, sin and bondage too often attend them ; and certainly with christians they are usually the most successful instruments wherewith to defile them. Our Bible history of saints, and our own observations on human life, testify to this truth ; and I think a labourer should in a more than common degree strive after the crucifixion of the flesh with “ the affections and lusts,” and endeavour to possess an equal, regulated and sanctified state of heart. Sins upon this point, like all the sins of God’s children, are no doubt blotted out in all-sufficient blood ; but this is not enough for such an one ; the grieving of the Comforter is worse to him than death ; and the consequent blot brought upon the beloved cause, which is interwoven with the heart, is a grief and bitterness which never can be lost on this side the grave. I say *labourers* ought thus to act and discipline themselves, because they are necessarily admitted to so much of confidence, and called out to such feelings of sympathy, as to endanger their beginning in the Spirit to end in the flesh. It is time enough, with the most lawful and sanctified affections, when some maturity of judgment and feeling is possessed ; and even then prayer, vigilance, and weaning from the creature appear absolutely necessary, if the labour of love and the communion of the Spirit be vigorous.

I feel very much in your case for the young friend to whom I allude ; but she is a Christian, and as such can enter into the interests of a fellow-pilgrim’s duty. How wonderful is that principle which is given us in Christ, making us to sit in judgment, and to decide against those things for which perhaps the whole inner man is clamorous. I admire the marvellous and invincible power of the Holy Ghost within us, who bringeth all things into subjection by his mild and gentle persuasion,

and effectually worketh in us a readiness to forego all things in order to enjoy fellowship and association with our heavenly King. And blessed be our God that we have been thus called, and in a measure have tested the Spirit's conformity to that call. What are we, indeed, if we cannot triumph over the various hindrances which are laid in our way ! We little understand or appreciate the promise and the omnipotence that is on our side, when we faint and are discouraged ; whereas cheerful expectation and hope become us, with the resolution of David, “ I will pursue after mine enemies, I will *overtake*, yea I will not turn again till they be utterly consumed.” Here is the noble ardor of a christian soldier, and a purpose of grace which must be attended with answerable success ; for engagements multiply upon us on God’s part to the crowning of *such* a combat with victory. Is it not then something which we are bound to chide and rebuke the heart for, when indolence, uncertainty or cowardice get any possession within ?

I would go back to the former subject a little, just to say, explicitly, that I hope you have not only broken your entanglement, but are guarding against the indulgence of any former habits of expression and endearment which might keep alive sparks that are dangerous. Hankerings after such things are always evil, reviving old corruptions, and giving the enemy advantage to play with our peace ; besides that common integrity towards the happiness of the object in question demands a consistent equality of manner and converse. But perhaps I needed not to have expressed this hope ; your own mind will apprehend it as quickly as mine ; only knowing the deceitfulness of the heart and the *slyness* of the enemy, it is well to be looking out for every road of access which may be opened to the heart.

I think I get very increasingly aware of the nature of

that conflict in which we are engaged. What a bloody warfare! what an *incessant* contention! This last epithet is to be treasured up in our recollection; for no cessation can ever be experienced on this side the grave; and perhaps in moments when all is most in calm, we have greatest reason to possess that calm in the vigour of watchful expectation.

The style of trial will probably be very soon greatly changed with you, my dear friend. I look forward to your entrance upon college—I will not say with anxiety, for I can trust you in the bosom of the Lord, but with many parental thoughts and prayers in your behalf. It is a scene which has usually proved so dangerous to many, that we cannot but apprehend it a field where many hosts of hell assemble;—yet greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. Almighty love keeps you as the apple of his eye; and as Daniel dwelt in spiritual honour amidst the dissipations and temptations of the court of Babylon, so can you, in the midst of a flood of university snares and traps.

It is a great happiness that you have been introduced to many of Christ's saints there. This will give an immediate turn to the current of your acquaintance, and will be a means of enlivening faith and sanctity. But still “be sober, be vigilant!” and let me entreat you, my beloved friend, to *begin* as much as possible in the course which you desire to maintain,—this disarms many a temptation.

Every motive seems abundantly to rest upon you for peculiar devotion. Your early steps have been marked like those of Josiah, and others, with special manifestations of the right hand of the Lord in your behalf. How have you been favoured with compassions flowing from everlasting love, and been visited both in personal interests and relative situations with interpositions which

raise up Ebenezers all along your path. O retrace them, and let them draw from your heart tributes of grateful praise, whilst they serve to excite you in every loving exertion on the side of your God; and may the same Eternal Friend stay by every one of your steps, till He brings you to the countless multitude of saints on high!

Blessed be God! my little vineyard seems very luxuriant at present; showers and beams come down upon us, and many make lively shoots in the spiritual life. I am sure there is everything around us in this respect for gratitude. Sorrows of course mingle in the cup; but sorrows become part of our joys when Jesus gives them. So much does He continue to say, "I did know thee in the wilderness," that the wilderness has irresistible attractions. Where would we be but with our beloved! If He is in the storm, the storm is better than the calm; and so sweet are his communications when tribulation abounds, that our loving hearts would say, Lord! lead where thou wilt, here I am waiting to follow thee.

Our missionary thoughts seem to meet no maturity as it respects our personal exertions or call. I suppose Mr. T. would inform you that the result of Mr. B.'s visit seems to have been the wrapping up of our prospects towards it at present. What the Lord may yet open we know not; but He seems to have designed a more limited plan towards N. Z——; perhaps to secure more glory to Himself, that a handful of corn upon that island may prove as Libanus, and the weaker attempt be the successful one. Every encouragement seems to offer for those who are designed to go, and the prospect very clear and fair. May the Lord give the suitable hearts to such as enter upon the important work!

I hope you do not fail to commune together upon this subject. Men separated for such a service are

liable to a thousand peculiar assaults from the enemy and the voice of nature; and it is well to exercise a brother's heart towards them; and by converse, and objects of faith brought before the mind, to seek to animate and stimulate their affections.

I always think much wisdom is needful in the communion of saints, in order to render it truly what it is intended to be; and that we ought each one to consider the particular disposition, circumstances and prospects of the other. Thus we bear each other's burdens, or share in joys, whilst a sweet spirit of self-denial and charity increases in the soul by such exercises. But alas! we are *slow* to learn, and upon no subject more so than what respects sympathies to another;—so many vile corruptions of self come in, that the converse of christians is often overrun with these weeds, and edification choked. You will learn enough of this, my dear —, as you pass on your way, not only from your own heart's bitterness, but from observation on a flock which often brings before us a very melancholy picture of the extent of the fall, and the awful ruin in which human nature lies. Blessed be God for the remedy; and that in Him who was lifted up in the wilderness, an antidote is found for all the poison of hell.

Let me hear from you soon. Consider my engagements, and do not stand upon answers. Fain would I write much oftener than I do; but as the Lord increases influence, work increases, and with this my bodily strength has failed much lately; but supernatural efficiency is ever given when God has a work to be done. Farewell. The Lord Jesus be yours; I cannot wish you greater riches.

Believe me ever your affectionate mother and friend,
M. S.

XLIX.

Sickness—Confidence in pledged Promise—Arrangements for Study—Purposes of allowed Conflicts—Simplicity attained through deep Waters—Rich Variety in God's Dispensations.

I HAVE been much longer before writing to you, my dear —, than was either my intention or my wish, but you will have learnt from our dear — that we have been suffering under the painful visitation of sickness, if painful that may be termed in which there is so much of covenant and eternal love. Since your departure, my own weakness has been much increased, until the last few days; and although an attempt has been made to hold some little meetings in my room upon the Sabbath, I have learnt by that very effort how much I am debilitated. I trust however, and believe that I shall be restored to a little more working-time, and have something more of opportunity to testify of Christ. M— has been very ill, she is yet wrapped up and delicate; but the Lord has been with us, and the bow of the everlasting purpose has perhaps appeared the more brilliantly by reason of the apparent clouds which came over our sky. May we always, my dear —, be triumphant in these possessions, and then rest and peace must be sealed as our own. I delight in that steady affiance which apprehends the Omnipotent Arm, whatever pathway we may tread; and here is the victory and blessedness of faith which enables us to rest upon the pledged promise, and asks no more for confidence than the word of the Lord. It is evident that this was the great excellence of the degree of this grace in the saints who have gone before us, and whose record we love to read; and I doubt not that it is to this standard the Holy

Ghost is intent upon leading the redeemed nation. Oh let us listen with internal obedience to the operation so victorious and desirable, and never rest satisfied short of absolute discoveries that we are advancing in this hidden life.

I am sorry that your mind should be harassed still with uncertainty respecting your course of studies, as it appears to me that nothing can be more opposed to comfort or advancement than fluctuation of purpose and pursuit. I hope, however, that before this reaches you the question will be decided. From the manner in which you have stated the arrangement of your time, it seems that mathematics will not totally eat up the hours ; were they to occupy you to the exclusion or to the *scanty* study of the Scriptures, I should think them best declined ; but as it seems compatible to pursue each with a due proportion of time, perhaps, situated as you are, it may prove the best resolve to fall in with the requirements of the University, and to give your attention to this object. Every study which is not connected with the great interests which we have embraced must have something of barrenness in our estimation. The classics may have less of this, as to lively influence upon the feelings and imagination, but in some instances they are not the less to be considered barren on this account. In fact, the Bible, the heart, and the kingdom, are the only *satisfactory* subjects ; and when these are not suffered to *engross* our attention, all we can do is to undertake what expediency renders necessary, in a humble and vigilant spirit. I trust this will be done by you, and the hours of tedious application be sanctified by faith and prayer. The time which is allotted to these preparatory steps will soon be gone, and the dearest undertaking of your heart be gratified. In the mean time, an active mind will be

gathering honey from all circumstances, and the present season may furnish you with much of *experience* for future scenes. It must be evident to you that the Holy Spirit has been instructing you in *this* study with great persistence ; the conflicts and exercises through which you have lately passed are all of them ministerial as well as personal in their intention ; and undoubtedly there is not an acquaintance more necessary, in order truly to discharge a pastor's care, than that which is formed with your own heart. How could we know how to sympathize with fellow-sinners, if we had not groaned in the detection of our own sinfulness ? how could we believe the truth of some extensive temptations and depths of darkness, had we not the experimental testimony that such things could be ? But when the heart is broken, humbled, and deeply taught the strength of nature's captivity, and the only sufficiency of unwearyed love, then we can open the arms of mercy to any, and understand what are the cordials which are required in the trying way. For this reason, no doubt, the Lord usually brings his *labouring* people through much tribulation ; and whilst the more private soldier has less need of this extensive discipline of the soul, the *leader* must be well exercised in all which may make him an able and careful commander. This may reconcile to endurance, nay, breathe a holy ambition into your heart, seeing that the highest station of gracious calling must be most exposed, and that Jesus himself has condescended to be foremost in this loving sympathy, wherever he could be touched with congeniality of suffering. And, after all, we know that the deceitfulness of sin must be discovered in ourselves, even should we have little prospect of relative usefulness : that deep abyss of insincerity and vile abomination, which we carry within us, is not to be *guessed* at, and the exploring of such a pit

of darkness must needs be attended with pain for a lengthened time,—but oh, to what establishment doth it bring the tried soul—how, when once the tempestuous ocean has been proved and the Rock of Ages is found in the midst, upon which to anchor and be at rest, does the rescued spirit rejoice in the name of our Lord ; and with transport of humble affiance trust only in the salvation of Jesus, and make no other boast but in Emmanuel's power! *Simplicity* is most precious to God and to the saint ; we come to it through deep waters ; but when once it is formed, our peace shall flow as a river, and our righteousness be as the waves of the sea. I trust, my dear friend, that all this is witnessed by your own heart, and that you know of a truth how blessed that frame must always be which finds us in quiet confidence, trusting in the shadow of the Almighty, and safely sheltered underneath his wings. I have not had much of working, as to intercourse with my little flock lately ; but the langour of my body seems to have been the means of some sweet retirements of spirit, in which converse with heaven is most refreshing. I often admire the rich *variety* with which the Lord feeds and cherishes his people, taking occasions to pay us precious visits in many ways, and causing us to *find them* as we travel onwards, whether we pass over mountains of difficulty or are walking through the stiller valleys of seclusion and quiet,—O may we find him always and every where, and be able to say in every situation, “ Christ my All in all ! ”

Give my affectionate love to H—— ; I will write to him next week, please God. We hear nothing from India, but we trust all is well. I hope you have communion with each other in the things of eternal life. I commend you to the everlasting arms, and am ever your most affectionate mother in Christ,

M. S.

L.

To a dear Disciple under Trials and Difficulties—Encouragements to Zeal for Children.

MY DEAREST M——,

I HAVE just seen our dear friend, from whom I have received your direction, and she seems relieved by my desire of writing to you by this post, as she is unavoidably prevented herself; I told her I would explain the hindrances, and promise for her that next week her own pen shall express the language of her heart. She is a good Samaritan, and so busied in attending the death-bed of a poor unhappy sinner as to have very little time for more than necessary claims. I know this will be a sufficient excuse in your own bosom, and that self-denial in such a cause will be very welcome. The poor woman evidences so much of real penitence that our hearts are all interested for her, and I trust she will be numbered among those blessed examples of the power and grace of Jesus, which shall everlastingly shew forth his praise.

We may bless the Lord that he thus exhibits what he can and will do; and for my own part I feel a sacred ambition to be placed with those who shall thus the most eminently speak what he is!

Oh my dear M——, how endearing a view of Jesus, the sinner's friend, is granted to us in these his methods of love; and what a cementing principle of confidence and gratitude do we experience on these occasions. May we increase, by all his ways, in devotedness of affection to him, and in discoveries of that covenant of life which is altogether to the praise of the glory of his grace.

I have not been unmindful of you, my dear girl, and my prayers are with you ever. There can be nothing more calculated to bind the hearts of God's children together than sympathy in affliction; and perhaps this is one end for which we are brought into the furnace. The sufferings of body which have tried you I am not ignorant of; and I know you are one to whom spiritual distress is likewise familiar. Yet, would we have it otherwise? Once with full consent of heart we are brought to embrace every severest dispensation, and we can add to the testimony of the Psalmist of old, "that it is good for us to have been afflicted." Is not the light of God's countenance the very rejoicing of our heart, and the most blessed inheritance which can fall to our portion? And never is it found so sweet as in the dreary night of adversity, or when letting fall some gracious beam in the midst of an overclouded path!

I often think, when looking back upon the way which I have travelled, that the most rich and delightful moments have been those of mournful and serious solitude, when, in converse with the Lord, sorrows and sins are spread before him; and the weight of affliction has been blest to render the heart soft and susceptible.

We know that the great end, which God has in view by proving us, is to bring us into child-like repose in his love and in his will. And I think we may take the comfort of believing that in some measure this effect has been produced in us; and now we can say it is our meat and drink to follow him whithersoever he leadeth.

I seem to stand in a state of preparation for any calamity or any unexpected requirement from heaven, and as a stranger here to feel that I have no certain dwelling-place. My beloved M—, let us cultivate with increasing fervor the surrender of our all to Him,

and seek to find that we have world and heaven too in Christ !

The most apparently important events of this life will soon close upon us for ever, and the feelings which now too often seem ready to overwhelm us will then be lost—save as their sanctified effect remains.

I am glad you are once more in the same kingdom with those with whom you were so affectionately associated, and who still love you dearly. I did not like your being away in another land; but Jesus proves himself to be that Rock which follows us with refreshing streams through all the wilderness; and though deprived of outward supplies, perhaps you have thereby tasted much more of the unmixed sweetness of that fulness that is in him. We have the privilege of carrying our living water about wherever we go, and no barren land nor heathen shores can ever exclude the child of grace from the most dear fellowship of our Lord and life !

O how full of blessedness will that world be where no more of anxieties shall harass the soul, and no more parting sighs shall rend the bosom. The fruition of our Redeemer's presence will overflow our souls; and much blessed enjoyment, no doubt, will be derived from the restoration of the saints to each other's loved society, with the destruction of all those alloys which we suffer here. There, my dearest M——, I trust we shall be rejoined; and the communion which many a time we have found to be so sweet on this side the grave will be renewed in much more refined enjoyment.

I always steadily believe that we shall meet in the bosom of the Lord. Past Ebenezers raised to the glory of his name forbid me to apprehend that he should ever leave me or forsake me. And assuredly the same may be said in your behalf, for He has been mighty in

your salvation, and for every circumstance of soul and body has appeared in your succour, and evidenced by many wonderful ways how wise, and great, and good he is in all the interests of the soul he loves.

It will rejoice you to have my testimony added to your own feelings respecting your friend ; she seems to grow in humility, charity and zeal, and her whole heart to be given up to the service of Christ. She is diligently occupied day by day in testifying of the grace of our Saviour, and I hope her visits are greatly blessed. Indeed most of those whom you remember are getting into increased solidity of experience and conduct, and the opening for new labours amongst the young ones is very encouraging. Towards them each of the more advanced is inclined to take a mother's part, and with such prospects may we not encourage ourselves in our God, and go forth to the conflict with increasing stedfastness of soul !

In your situation, my beloved girl, this effort for the Lord may be made, and the instruction which you may pour into the youthful minds, which are under your care, will not be lost. How many most eminent fathers in the church have owed their first impressions to some pious parent or nurse ; and how constantly do we see examples of the Lord's remembrance of such endeavours, even perhaps when the labourer is no more in this world ! Augustine and our Newton are instances which we should not lose sight of ; and perhaps you have been taken to your present station for the very purpose of sowing the seed of a blessed immortality in the souls of your little charge. O be persevering, my dearest M——, in your loving attempt, and let no discouragements sink your spirit or make you despise the day of small things.

Farewell. God Almighty bless and build you up, and give you all his joys.

Pray for me, and let us hold sweet communion in the Spirit of Jesus and at the throne of grace.

Pray write to me as soon as you can, and remember that I am ever your most affectionate mother and friend,

M. S.

LI.

Occupations—Missionary Preachers—Remarkable Blessing on Rev. P. R.—State of the Flock—Zeal with Prudence—Interests of Children—Scattered Salt—Love of Retirement.

I HAVE intended to write to you many weeks, my dear —, but from many causes have been prevented. My situation as to engagements is much changed, and through the increasing claims upon me from my sister's extreme indisposition I am under the necessity of attending to domestic objects more than I used to do; and certainly the last summer has been incessantly filled with company of some kind, but most generally blended with christian communion, so that fatigue and exertion have been better endured. On such occasions I remember what the Scripture saith, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for some have entertained angels unawares." Now the meanest saint is more honourable than the highest angel, and to receive such is a privilege indeed.

It is well, my dear M—, when we can in any measure realize the blessedness of walking by faith, and that we can then say, "Labour is rest and pain is sweet, if Thou, my God, art here!" I have not been unmind-

ful of *you* in all these scenes ; many things combine to bring you before me, and particularly when favoured with such ministers as we have lately had ; for well I know how much your heart would burn within you, and your mind be delighted to hear the cause of Jesus pleaded with so much energy and power as we have lately experienced.

I suppose Miss —— will have told you every thing interesting which has happened amongst us during this summer ; yet I would add my mite to her testimony to the zeal of Mr. Roe, and the blessing which has accompanied his labours. His first appearance amongst us was remarkably providential ; and every circumstance of his work has been attended with continued displays of the riches of the grace of Christ, and of the sovereignty with which He opens the hearts of men. It appears wonderful to us, where persons who have sat so long under the faithful preaching of the gospel, and have remained dead and insensible, that now the same truths should penetrate their ears and hearts ! But no doubt this is intended to display the power of the Lord, and to shew that the times and seasons are from Him. Everything which confirms this to our minds is comfort ; at least I find it so, leading me to resolve all things into his eternal, unchangeable, and unerring purpose, and hence deriving sweet consolation to my soul, both as it respects my own private or of public interests.

There can be no consideration more likely to settle the desires and expectations than that of affiance in the overruling power of the Lord ; and more especially to the saints, who possess in Jehovah a Father and a Friend. Oh, dear M——, how much below our privileges we live when we know not this peace, or lose sight of the foundation upon which we are built. I

dare say you will acknowledge with me how gracious the Lord is, and has been in every part of his dispensations towards us ; and may we never shrink back from any future trial to which we may be called. Ere long the whole scene of exercise will be past, and a glorious reverse be felt and known by us who have had fellowship with Him in affliction. For my own part the baptism of Christ becomes precious to me ; and I think we may almost say that even now chastisement is joyous ; for faith realizes the eternal effects, and we feel that the dross is consumed by the heat of the fire. What more do we desire, my beloved girl ? is not the will of the Lord, as it is our sanctification, our dearest expectation and our perpetual prayer ? O yes ; and when He thus answereth the best desires of our heart, however painful it be, let us therein rejoice.

From the account which Miss —— gives me of your state, my heart is indeed gratified ; and I believe, my dear M——, that the Holy Spirit is perpetually with you in his sure and ripening operations. For this I am sure you have my sincerest prayers ; and truly I look forward to meet you in the blessed day of the Lord, when we shall unite in our Saviour's praise, and shall behold how much and how mysteriously the Lord has wrought for us.

The interests of our Lord are at present very flourishing around us, if we may judge from appearances. The fields are ripe for the harvest, and, blessed be God, labourers come forth in some form or other, and vigour and zeal animate our little flock. The scene appears somewhat similar to what presented itself when we first came to Knaresborough ; and my heart beats with anxiety that it may be improved with as much zeal and with more prudence and experience. I wish we could more usually preserve the warmth of our first love with the advantage of improved judgment ! Unhappily the

soul seems to lose much of its fervour of feeling after the first impressions are gone off, and we are too apt to excuse it by the opinion of our advance in solidity. It is true there is much of natural feeling often when we are first awakened ; and perhaps St. Paul had known this when he says, “ Though I have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know I him no more ;” yet we should endeavour to combine the solidity of a mature profession with the warmth of heart which surely the glorious objects we pursue demand. May God Almighty kindle upon the altar of our heart the perpetual fire of holy affections, and every emotion of our souls be consecrated unto Him !

I am very glad that you have not changed your situation in the family. The advantage of more of this world’s good could never compensate for the loss of retirement, and the sweet opportunities which you must frequently possess in your condition. Besides the occasion presented for promoting the glory of the Lord in the hearts of those little ones who are committed to your care, and in every respect I always think your situation is favourable to your best interests, and such as may be very beneficial to others. Whatever our state, however, faith can make the most common occupation a sacrifice to God. And in this the christian possesses great advantage ; for with them even a cup of cold water shall not lose its reward. We will not lose sight of this, but endeavour after an ability to carry an offering, even in our heart’s core, and in the sight of his eyes ;—then shall the wilderness blossom as the rose, and every action become an occasion of glorifying Him.

Your dear friend is not with us at present ; she is gone from Knaresborough for many weeks, to my sorrow—for she is a faithful and industrious fellow-labourer, and I

trust is much blessed. This will gladden your heart. But I tell her perhaps she is gone to carry some light to a dark mind. And since we are the salt of the earth, my dear —, we must not refuse to be scattered up and down if thereby a gracious savour is to be spread. I wish you could be here awhile to see and hear all that God is doing amongst us; but the trial of your absence has been sanctified hitherto, and at last we shall see how all things have worked together for good.

I am writing to you from Stonefall, where I am once a week to stay a night—by this means I see my sister and Maria, and have a little fresh air. I believe it serviceable to my general health, though you know that I never want any cessation from a work in which I hope God will be pleased to grant that I may spend and be spent—but retirement has ever been a luxury to my natural mind; and an opportunity for communion with the Lord of a more private and enlarged nature is what I am grateful for! How sweet a refreshment to pour out our soul to the Lord!—few moments are so precious on this side the grave; for whatever be the state of our mind, either in sorrow, or in darkness, or in joy, the bosom of Jesus is the place where the child of God finds the dearest rest! And I hope, my dear M——, that this retreat will be endeared by every circumstance of our journey, so that we shall make it our resting-place in the hour of death and through all eternity.

I shall hope for a letter from you soon. I would write more frequently had I time: this you know, my dear girl; and I hope that you likewise know that I bear you on my heart before the Lord in truest desires, for your best and everlasting interests. You have more leisure than I, and should give me some of it. You know I love to see your handwriting, and give it a hearty welcome. I will not seal my letter, for I expect

one from Miss ——, and may tell you how she is to-morrow; but good night for the present, and believe me ever your truly affectionate friend and mother in Christ,

M. S.

LII.

End of the Lord's Dealings our Sanctification.

MY DEAR ——,

I WRITE to you with unfeigned desire to testify of the affection which I ever bear towards you, and trust that even this little medium of communication will be acknowledged by our dear Master. At this time, however, I write under circumstances by which I am much limited in time, and the reason I know will be grievous to you. M—— is very ill, and has been confined to bed three weeks, excepting the last two days in which she has been able to sit up for a few hours. I trust that in a little time it may be the Lord's gracious will to raise her again; but in all times and at all seasons, my dear ——, we have a friend with us in whom peace and consolation must abound. This has been manifested abundantly under this visitation, wherein in the night-watches, and in the day anxieties, divine faithfulness has been triumphant. The advance of my dear child in that life which is spiritual and eternal, must be a subject that in all situations administers to my mind unutterable joy, and you have a heart, my dear ——, that will be specially interested in this subject, seeing that many a time when she sat on your knee she has listened to the name of Jesus from your lips. Her course is full of usefulness and devotion, and her longing spirit in the whole of her

habitual experience seems looking out even for the coming of the moment in which she will ascend to final rest; and with this influence of course we see that the hour of sickness is stripped of its terrors to her, and of very much of its afflictive character, and patience and faith are constantly evident. Is not this a sufficient source for the risings of praise and thanksgiving? Indeed I feel it so. And in the weeks that are past, my soul has been borne to my Saviour's bosom in this spirit. Let your prayers and praises, my dear friend, be with us, and the sympathies of your heart be extended to this scene of suffering and of grace. Perhaps, however, by the time this reaches you we may be restored to the enjoyment of health, yet in all our paths we can meet in the Spirit, and in this rich communion maintain a fellowship that will be perfected in heaven!

How clear it is that the Lord's will is directed to the sanctification of our souls. I contemplate the wonderful methods which the Lord adopts for this end with much admiration, and certainly with full conviction that wisdom most perfect and glorious governs all these methods. How powerfully can He touch the core of the heart! how mightily reach the seat of every hidden disease! And with what patient skill does he apply the remedies of the gospel, flowing as they do from a crucified Redeemer in all the plenitude of love.

Our interest is to lay open the hidden necessities, and with a simplicity of mind and heart to confide in the presence before which we come. O may we ever do this, and be near to Him in the confidential affection of the child that rests upon the parent's breast. Farewell, my beloved ——, I am truly yours in the lasting love of Christ,

M. S.

LIII.

The few following Letters run through a long period, and will serve better to shew her constant Christian love by being placed in immediate succession. Her correspondent, in transmitting them to me, thus remarks:—“ They may be valuable, “ as serving to shew how her relative domestic claims were readily embraced; “ and though they may be considered as containing nothing very striking, yet “ they beautifully manifest a sweet and deeply devotional spirit, brought to bear “ through every scene of life.”

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THIS unexpected date will not surprise you, my dear —, since you are acquainted with the visitation which has rendered change of air and scene necessary. Mr. C. told me he saw you in York, and that he said how dangerously ill my dear M. had been; the severity of the attack upon her constitution left her so weak and with such continued slow fever that she bore the appearance of rapid decline, and in truth my own heart anticipated the near approach of her call to everlasting rest. You can scarcely conceive how incessantly the nature of the complaint required me night and day; I was obliged to be upon instant watch, and although different in kind from my dear sister's sick-room, it was very much the same in degree of suffering and of dependence upon momentary care. Preparations for our journey next engaged me, and during our travelling days I have been incessantly busy; we are at length in a quiet lodging which stands upon the edge of the influx of the sea at the mouth of the river, and here we may remain a short time, proposing to return home by London.

To what a variety of exercising scenes are we called, my beloved friend, during our passage to the final place of rest! Surely my own days have been peculiarly

marked by vicissitudes, and not less varying have been my inward scenes. It is happy for us that we can write upon all “God is love;” in this and this only is repose and peace; and I feel as if the world itself afforded no other presentations of comfort, nor indeed need we wish for more. Probably this simplicity of expectation has been wrought in us by means of earthly fluctuations, and when the present faith and future visions of our spiritual life are taken into question we shall greatly rejoice in the consolation even of our sorrows here. Very soon all changes will give place to one great and blissful certainty, and I hope our affections are increasingly settled upon that never-ending abode.

I am sorry to find from a letter this morning that dear Mr. R. is in such danger; I enter into the loss he will be to the people to whom his labours have endeared him; as to himself the exchange is desirable; but these thoughts resolve themselves into how far it may affect your circumstances, and when I read the account I wished that fewer miles separated us, and that a letter of comfort from my hands could more speedily reach yours. Let me entreat your exercise of faith and composure under these things, well-knowing, as you do, how great is the privilege of comprehensive exercise of soul. Let not any change in this world shake your firm confidence in Him who rules all things, and upon whose heart of mercy and truth your name is engraven. We have no doubt but futurity will unfold the riches of goodness in the most adverse storms, and even here bright hours of manifested deliverance may be oft-times nearer to us than we discern or expect. I hope the Spirit’s consolations shall never fail you, and that the sympathy and comfort you have been so ready to impart to others, may abundantly replenish yourself.

I received your letter—I entered with gratitude into

the new scenes of labour to which the Lord's mercy introduced you, only fearing that it might prove more than the weakness of your health would bear; if, however, you are able to get through the work, I know you will be glad in it. The evils of this life seem to lose half their bitterness, and its joys have less of infatuating power while we are constrained by the nature of our occupations to keep our eye upon the invisible realities which last for ever.

Our journey here has been one of great interest to me, as you will suppose when I tell you that we past through C—, H—, and many places in which recollections of the most heart-touching nature filled my whole soul. . . . I was glad to retire into myself. How shall my pen give any colour to affections and sensations which go beyond utterance, and why do I attempt to express that which is better understood by sympathy of heart.

I hope the influence which has accompanied this temporary absence from home will be abiding. The whole of our travel has had in it much to draw forth the best affections, particularly our stay at Lincoln and Peterborough; the former giving us the sublime object of the beautiful cathedral, which we went through under the evening shades, and the latter that of a Minster embosomed in wood, and contemplated by us under the moonlight beam, and in the midst of songs of innumerable nightingales, which fill the grove by which it is surrounded. Here too there is a fine scene before our windows, where we look upon the water, sometimes busy with ships, &c., and at others peaceful without one ruffled wave.

Farewell; all and every blessing be upon you.

I am ever your most affectionate friend,

M. S.

LIV.

Thanksgiving for Testimonies—Opening Prospects—Ministerial with School Labours—The Choice, subject to the Mind of the Lord.

I do indeed most unfeignedly rejoice with you, my beloved friend, in the merciful interpositions which have been displayed on your behalf. I have not feared, but I have had anxieties leading to prayer and faith respecting those things which lay immediately before you. I thank the Lord, however, that unto this moment goodness and mercy have conspicuously encompassed you.

I was much gratified a few weeks since by the testimony which Mr. G—— gave to your ministry, and the great affection of your people towards you. I need not say how gratefully my heart went up to heaven in a tribute of thanksgiving, as I listened to what so much satisfied my soul both as to your personal and ministerial influence. He said much which I need not repeat; this is enough to shew you the ground I had for thanksgiving, for he is a good judge and a man of influence, therefore his testimony is valuable. I mention it to you that your heart may gather encouragement, and be awakened to joy in the great Appointer of our lot; and I trust in very truth the operating power of the Eternal Spirit is with you, preparing a people and enriching you as their ordained instructor unto everlasting life. O how increasingly precious is the blessed work in which we are pledged to be Christ's. I could say much upon its tried fruitfulness and great return of present peace, but your own bosom glows with a kindred fire, and can well understand what is kindled in mine. How great is the privilege thus to be counted worthy to go forth into the highways, and compel the

ransomed of the Lord to their blessed return! How high will the office appear (whatever may be its measure) when we enter upon the reserved rest, and behold the company unto whom we have been the acknowledged instruments! My dear friend, go on in holy triumphing joy; our King will come at last, and all our interests and sorrows be lost in anthems of unutterable praise.

I should have been restless to have answered your last letter had not —— been disposed to visit York; the delivery of my message would relieve you upon the point in immediate agitation; at least so far as to determine you in our opinion respecting the proposal from Mr. ——.

My own desire led me to prefer the prospect at B——; it appeared to be in every respect preferable, but since our Lord has shut up that opening, it is evident some wise and gracious reason prevails to render it better in the issue, and there appears to be so many combining considerations recommending T—— for your present acceptance, that probably this is the will of God respecting you.

I have decided objections to the union of ministerial with school labours (as tutor) unless an absolute necessity exists. I think it is an encroachment upon the hours more particularly intended for the pastoral duties, and certainly an exhausting occupation both to mind and body. But it appears that this will not be an abiding tie. I am sure, in your state of health, it would be very injurious. Other things considered, perhaps it will be a situation presenting you with a *comparative* degree of relaxation, and, I trust, of usefulness likewise. All your steps have been so much under the gracious regulation of our dear Lord, that unbelief and fear must yield their attempts. I suppose you have written 'ere

this in acceptance of the offer, and in whatever way Jesus may purpose further to appear, I trust all is going on well and will find us ready to obey.

You see I have little *assurance* of time. My course of work is in some measure different from what it has been : when my invalid state made me more retired I could then seclude myself for many a day or hour, but now I am liable to so many *calls* from strangers and persons passing through Knaresborough, that oftentimes when I have arranged for retirement I have to leave my desk and my room.

Once it would have been a distressing burden to my spirit, and *now* it is not what belongs to my natural disposition. But the Lord is often pleased to vary his appointment towards us, and I hope I am learning the blessedness and necessity of a *choice* subject to that mind. It is a rich source of spiritual peace and equality of mind when we attain to any degree of this condition. Oh ! I sigh for its larger extent, and long for the completion of that work which resolves every wish, sensation, or desire into the manifested will of God. How easy it is for us poor ignorant sinners to express these sentiments, yet how difficult to embody them in the habit of our way ; and how constantly do we learn, by painful experience, that we are weak where we suppose ourselves strong ! However, such things serve to the exercise of dependence, and greatly endear that provision of Almighty and instant power which we possess in the Spirit's imparted strength.

When your treaty with Mr. —— shall be concluded, let me know.

Farewell, my dear W——. Believe me, your affectionate friend,

M. S.

LV.

Separation from a Flock—Purposes unfolded—Engagements.

I HOPE, my dear W——, that long ere this the Lord has answered my prayer and given to your mind a greater degree of rest and peace than it has lately had. I was much concerned to find your spirit depressed, although I could not but fully enter into all those peculiar affections which exist between the labourer and the flock. It is impossible to conceive of these affections by any representation made, and my own experience enables me powerfully to ascertain what must follow upon the prospect of separation from a people to whom you have reason to hope you are blest. I therefore entirely feel for you in this present dispensation, but I would always desire that we may keep sight of that superior bond which we have and owe to Jesus, whose will is ever the best, and will, I trust, always prove to us the dearest. In every dispensation there is a call upon faith and an exercise of love, and, no doubt, He who not only cares for the fold in general, but for each individual worker therein, so appoints the circumstances of our way as to produce in us all the increase of the inward kingdom, whilst it is certain he will not fail to bring one of his children home, nor ever suffer a final injury to ensue upon the loss of such instruments as they are disposed most fondly to love.

Possibly the Lord has reserved other souls to whom he intends to send you forth ; and there may be now, in the various scenes to which you may yet be called, many poor sinners whose first excitement, or whose quickened state, may be made dependant upon your work.

I remember that when I left C—— I suffered much on the ground of leaving my little company behind; but how great things the Lord had prepared for my dark perception! Not that I felt unwillingness to this place: very much the contrary, but I little conceived of the extent of that scene to which his good spirit was conducting me! Thus, my dear friend, it will probably be with you. Your efforts hitherto have been but as *preparatory exercises* for the field; and the purpose of everlasting grace will most likely be unfolded in somewhat abundance.

The Lord has given you a preparation, and when this is the case, usually much opportunity for good is given.

We have had an interesting, though exceedingly busy season; our different parties for tea only ended last Friday—the increase of our flock obliging us to divide them into ten different evenings.

Farewell. Remember me to your young people, for whom I feel a great interest. Tell them I trust they will have the Good Shepherd always near, though they may lose his servant. God bless you ever, and believe me your truly affectionate friend,

M. S.

LVI.

Affectionate Enquiry—Unusual Exercises—Reading Meetings—Fullness of redeeming Love.

MY DEAR W——,

THE length of time which has elapsed since we heard from you renders us all rather uneasy; and I write a letter almost of enquiry, wishing to know that all is well.

I hope silence is not an indication of illness ; let us receive a letter, for, believe me, the affectionate solicitude of real concern lives in us all, and I am sure very powerfully in me. The nearer we approach to that eternal home wherein dwelleth rest and peace, so much the more ought we to sympathize in the various exercises into which, as followers of Jesus, we are necessarily exposed ; and since it must happen that in proportion as we approach our God we are assimilated with Him in mind and likeness, I am sure the Spirit of love must be ours.

Possibly you are not much acquainted with the unusual exercises to which we have been lately exposed, and in which my own share has been a large portion ;-- none indeed can ever know the fulness of mercy and grace which the Lord has been pleased to dispense through the whole.

But all is well ! and no doubt Jesus reigneth and will reign,—happy is it for us if he reigneth and will reign within ; then none of those things can move us further than to call out the evidence of our professed principles, and to make us feel and know that it is no mere boast which enables the believer really and in truth to love and bless those who oppress. Blessed be God, I have felt nothing else in the whole, and I trust I shall not, for my bosom is, in this respect, serene and peaceful ; nor has it a wish in the matter but only that the will of the Lord may be done and his glory effected thereby.

I cannot remember whether or not I told you of the little reading-meetings which we have been endeavouring to establish in various parts of the town for the purpose of giving an opportunity to the aged, sick, and young women confined from public means, by their families, to hear the word of God. They are very interesting. Sixteen are already in motion and very well

attended. I wished the young ladies to undertake each one, and many of them have been ready to the work. The plan is to read a portion of the Scriptures, and either explain or converse, as is most suitable to the party, separating with prayer. The visitor is also to enquire after the domestic habits of each—the education of the children, the number of the sick, &c. &c.; and thus to keep up a degree of acquaintance with the neighbourhood in which the meetings may be. I have kept three to myself; if only I may be able to maintain my visiting through the winter and am to go round alternately to each of the others. This has been an abundant help to the general revival which seems to prevail, for it has brought over many dear young people into more relative action, and seems to have increased the bond of love.

Thus you see, my dear W——, we go on in the midst of wilderness-scenes, looking for and hastening to that better world where soon each present grief will be wiped away, and all the fulness of redeeming love be poured forth upon the soul. These are prospects which enrapture and lift above the scenes of earth; and Oh! I earnestly desire that they may so prevail as to swallow up all other interests, and make us live only in the joy of gathering in the Lord's poor sheep, and in seeking to be ourselves waiting and ready.

I bid you farewell, commanding you to our dearest Lord, whose truth and mercy fail not.

M. S.

LVII.

God's Countenance—Present Scenes commended—Abounding Work—Comments.

MY DEAR W——,

I VERY gladly avail myself of this opportunity to drop a few lines, and I have remained this morning in my room for this purpose. . . . How unspeakable is the debt of love which we owe to our Lord for those bright hopes, and how sweet the irradiating power which they have upon the otherwise dark and cheerless world. O, may we ever live in so healing an influence, and walk under the light of God's uplifted countenance; there is nothing short of this that can give us support and consolation, but in this we have that which causes the world to appear no more in shades of night. It is one of the causes of greatest thankfulness to my soul that it has pleased the Lord to accompany his visitations with an influence by which present scenes are so much *commended*. Do you start at this word as somewhat unusual in a believer's heart? Truly I may use it, for pressing as this life's burdens are, where there is so much of requisite labour but yet so much of provided support, they cease to grieve while Jesus is near. Beside all this, there is the sure inheritance, and when we enter its blissful possession, how vain—how empty will the considerations of earth appear!

I am glad that your opening prospect is promising. . . . We have had some friends of yours at Harrogate; I know you will be glad to hear of them, and friends indeed they seem to you. As to my own labours, my dear W——, they continue as far as demands go to abound; for work multiplies, and the

present state of the town has given it an affecting direction.

My Comment is committed to the Lord; blessed be His name, I am kept in a dependent mind; I leave the whole with Him. I am prepared to expect opposition and discouragement, because I enter upon view under unfavourable circumstances as it respects prejudice against a female worker. This last I counted upon; but on the other hand I have many friends, and most of them zealous ones; so that I have more to hope than many people from the private efforts of those, and as my work is chiefly calculated (if useful at all) to be so with the *serious*,—I look to those channels for its acceptance. Hitherto I have found it principally called for by those, and by young enquirers. I hope it may gradually make its way; if not, I am satisfied in having undertaken it for the Lord's sake, and not presumptuously, for it was urged time after time.

God bless you ever, and give you peace and sufficiency for every hour. Believe me ever your affectionate friend,

M. S.

LVIII.

Good to be here.—Changes—School at R.—Comments—Ebenezer.

MY DEAR W—,

(AFTER a charge to take care of health.) It is not only your individual enjoyment that is at stake, but certainly much of your strength for the arduous duties of the ministry. The time for resting quietly in the chamber where Jesus deposits his redeemed until the

resurrection-day will soon arrive; so long as it is delayed, it is our privilege to work, and I am sure that our advancing experience shews us it is *good to be here*, so far as we may be enabled to fill the allotted place of our pilgrimage to the Lord's glory. It is a serious consideration that when once the time of this life is gone, all opportunity to do any thing in the vineyard below is gone for ever; and when we think upon the important truth connected with this persuasion, it is sufficient to reanimate us to the conflict and bid us rise with fresh vigour for our way.

Great events, at least great *changes*, have taken place since I last wrote, but none will surprise you more than our removal from the Vicarage-house.

I have been in some measure overdone, and it was thought advisable for me to accompany my Maria to R——, where she was ordered for her health; we have been there a month, and only returned last Monday. The destitute state of the place is truly affecting; I never saw more entire absence of all spiritual light. . . . We have gathered 120 children together there, and they are to be continued, we hope, in a Saturday school, under the care of Miss ——; and with an attention to their books, &c. &c., a probable annual visit to reward and look after them. It is truly interesting to see the readiness with which they flock to the school-room and wait for instructions. O may the Lord Jesus gather some of his lambs from the midst of them! Let your prayers, my dear friend, unite with this appeal, and implore the descending blessing.

My work (the Comments) goes on as usual; your observation upon the punctuation is just; I think I told you how it happened; the later volumes are better. I send a little tract written by my sister. . . . Thus we labour, humbly hoping for the smile of God. 'Tis

happy to send forth streams in any way by which the great ocean of blessedness may be enquired after, tasted and known; and O may we meet our Lord in our way, and see his uplifted countenance! I enter my new school next week, and pray that it may in all respects be an Ebenezer.

Farewell:—may our dear and ever constant Shepherd keep and comfort you.

M. S.

LIX.

Better to be with Christ—Christmas Parties—Testimony—Philip—Distressed State of a sick Friend—Furnace.

YOU will welcome a few lines; may they find you in the comfort of that Eternal Spirit's presence, or resting in simplicity upon his unchanging care! We rapidly advance, my dear W—, to the conclusion of all pilgrimage exercises, and I trust that as we get nearer home we breathe more ardently for its blissful delight. To me there is no prospect of equal import or value, and I feel increasingly how much better it is to depart and be with Christ. Notwithstanding this, however, the expediency of remaining here is not forgotten, and the precious souls in the wilderness have not lost any of their hold on my heart. After a season of more than usual exertion I have felt an exhaustion of this mortal tabernacle that sometimes indicates to me that I might very suddenly go home; yet I recruit again and again. I think I shall soon resume my usual course.

We are now preparing for our Christmas parties, and shall probably be very busy for a few weeks. The return of these seasons always exhibits some changes:

many are removed from the place—others are gone into the eternal world, and new faces occupy their place—all serving to keep alive the profitable recollection that this is not our rest.

I rejoiced with you in an occurrence which I am sure must have yielded great joy to your soul,—I allude to the testimony left by the dear young disciple Miss —, to whose soul it appears you were the acknowledged instrument. Mr. G—— sent us a memoir, and I conclude that you will have one also. Her open and interesting statements of the impression she received through your ministry are very touching, and lifted up my heart in gratitude to the Lord as I read the detail. Probably, my dear W——, similar instances may exist in other quarters; and in the great day when Jesus shall make up his jewels, and when labourers shall receive their crown, you will have to exult in the faithfulness and love of the Lord, who so manifestly owns the loving efforts that his children put forth in his power. We do not sufficiently realize the value of *one* soul. I often think of the history recorded of Philip, who was sent into the desert that he might gather one rose to be found in that unpromising region. Had he never succeeded in another instance, this one was enough to render his whole life a blessing to him, and to repay with ample mercy all that he might endure for Jesus' sake. And is it not the same in our own case? Is not the same reasoning applicable in the very instance in which we rejoice; so that even were your labour carried no further, you may say “it is enough,” God has owned me to that precious soul, which has passed the stormy day, and is now in the midst of the myriads of the blest. There is no doubt, however, that the Lord will acknowledge you; go on therefore, my dear friend, and never faint. The invisible

hosts that are on your side are mighty, and commissioned by the angel of the everlasting covenant ; and as God's ambassador, you must prosper notwithstanding diabolical stratagems and assaults. We know that all things are in the hands of our great King, and that He governs the greatest and the smallest events by unerring counsel ; here may we repose, and the honour and will of our Lord be enough for us. May the Lord's countenance be in your path, and his holy peace assure your soul. I shall be glad to hear from you. We have the blessed assurance that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord, and herein we may cheerfully repose ; but there is a pressure belonging to this life's calamities which cannot but be felt, and under which we are constrained to say the world is a wilderness. How great is our privilege that we can look beyond the boundary of time, and take refreshing views of that eternity where sadness and sorrow are known no more : in the meantime the winds of the desert are doing us good, and are helping, in God's hand, to make us meet for abiding joys.

We have a very affecting example, just now, in the depressed state of Miss ——, of the necessity of cleaving close to our privileges during the time of health and of opportunity. I believe I mentioned to you in my last how fearfully she was assailed by Satan, and that her dying hours are those of exceeding conflict. I had hoped that this trial would have proved like some passing cloud, which would be quickly dispersed by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness ; but instead of any amendment of experience she becomes increasingly cast down, and sinks into a despondency which no human help can in the least degree mitigate. It is deeply affecting ; the sweetest promises are rejected as inapplicable ; the fulness of the covenant is considered a fulness that does

not supply any necessity of her soul, and in the most resolute resistance of every argument she delivers herself up to the dominion of unbelief. Are not these things loud addresses to us, my dear friend? O how often, as I walk to and fro through the fields to her sad abode, does my spirit rise in reflections most affecting to my own heart, and pour forth supplications and renewal of vows and surrender, to His ear who is the only comfort on which we can lean. It is infinitely merciful in our Lord thus to sanctify events which afflict us, and then to speak in the power of his own grace, lessons which He only can teach. (After relating the trials of some mutual friends, she proceeds):—

God continues to shew that the *furnace* is the place wherein he chooses to enrich and bless his people. I begin to *love* the furnace, painful as it may be to nature. Whatever brings Jesus Christ near is to my heart a welcome dispensation. O may it prove so even unto death.

Farewell;—believe me your most affectionate friend
in the best bonds,

M. S.

LX.

Propensity to forget—Interesting Exhibition—Oneness with Christ—Bodily Strength—A Death-bed.

MY DEAR W——,

You will have been expecting to hear from me, and I am sorry that I have delayed writing; but my eyes are to the Lord in these matters, and I trust also in all matters, for every day does but the more decidedly prove that He only is a sure Refuge. I am often

mournful in the sense of that strange inconsistency which attends a sinful heart, and the propensity we have to forget that there is none but Christ on whom to repose. I only make the remark from feeling how very little the heart's love to Jesus bears proportion to the claim or to the experience I have had in life, and I believe it is a sentiment which we all re-echo ; but, blessed be the Lord, that though we decrease in our own eyes, he increases ; and the more we suffer under a sense of individual and personal nothingness, the better is the preparation for exalting the Lord at last as *All in all*.

I think the place where you are now must present an interesting exhibition of human misery and necessity : I call it *interesting*, because these are regions wherein the sound of Jesus' name is often more welcome, and sinners under such circumstances are frequently made willing to listen to the tidings with more gratitude and affection ; and when we call to mind that the personal ministry of Christ was of this description, it sheds a still more sacred influence upon the heart when entering into his steps. . . . Do not be cast down by the difficulties and oppositions in your way. Let us remember that the *resistance* and *enmity* shewn is often a mark that Satan trembles for his kingdom.

I like your plan of subjects very much. Go on in this witness, and you will prosper. Be comforted ; ere long we shall reach a peaceful shore !

I received your letter, and was about to dispatch to you the little Memoir of Miss ——, whose aunt, you are probably aware, died at the same time, and they were buried together ; and also that a fortnight since Mrs. —— died, leaving the aged pilgrim to travel the few short days that are left in great human deprivation. Thus we see how the

longest unions of this life come to a close. How great therefore is the privilege of those who have *oneness* with Christ, possessing a union in which there is increasing fulness of joy, and who in those bonds one towards another realize the earnest of the Holy Ghost, and are one in Jesus for ever. Blessed be the Lord, the time will not be long that his children have to conflict with powers of darkness, and soon that morning will break, the light and glory of which shall dissipate every shade and fill the redeemed with a cloudless peace. In the meantime, it is a privilege to walk through a *wilderness-state*, and better far to feel that this is not our home, than to be numbered with the unhappy multitude who find their rest on earth—a miserable rest! for, alas, it is polluted and must destroy its enslaved inhabitants.

I rejoice that you have been enabled to consult the kind physicians at —, and that you hope to have derived some benefit. It is of great consequence to have such a proportion of bodily strength as may render the work of the Lord not beyond our power. I trust he will vouchsafe to support and help you to the last days as he hath hitherto done.

I cannot imagine how you have not received my former letter; perhaps it will appear by and bye. The account of poor Miss — could not have afforded you any thing but sorrow; she continued to yield herself up to deep despondency, and so determinately refused all arguments and all promises that I sometimes thought her mind must be a little affected. It was however a sad and painful scene. I called a few minutes after she had breathed her last, and her brother told me she had a dreadful struggle, and in the midst said, “I am now dying.” She always had expressed a horror at the thought, and looking to her mother she said, “O pray.” Her brother knelt down, and in the course of his appeal

to God used these words—" *Looking unto Jesus.*" She slowly, but with great emphasis, repeated them, and as she uttered the last word expired.

Thus it appeared that one last effort of faith was made. O may it be that it was triumphant faith, and that she found Him able and willing to save. You will understand how much pain has been endured on her account, and the solemn impression that is yet felt by her friends when she is mentioned. I believe that she is safe, but I am persuaded she felt that the former profession she had made had not been decided. The visitation was righteous, and I trust a furnace of purifying for her Master's kingdom, and it cries aloud to us to be honest in our surrender and simple in our faith.

I send in this parcel one of my books on the Articles: as you do not mention it, I conclude you have it not. Accept it from me.

M. S.

LXI.

Journey—Looking within the Veil.

THE date of my letter will surprise you, my dear friend; it might also almost surprise myself—for to remove so far from home is a strange event to me. It appears, however, to have been appointed by Him whose guiding direction we would ever realize, and when once we know that the path we tread is illumined by the pillar of fire, satisfaction must ensue. The declining health of my dear M—— has long been a subject of solicitude to those who love her, and to such as reap the benefit of her labours. The journey was long, but passed better

than I had anticipated. The distance was also beguiled by the exceeding beauty of the country through which we have travelled, more especially for the last fifteen miles; the road itself seems to have been little frequented of late, and it is broken and difficult, but its surrounding beauties, very much in character with the idea of an impregnable place, are of a description unusually beautiful. The windings of the river are remarkable along which we travelled all the way—on each side are hills to the left covered with brushwood—to the right stony and barren,—scattered cottages in high and romantic situations give animation to the scene, and the whole was brightened in beauty to us by the brilliancy of the day and the shadows cast from time to time across the scene.

The close of our journey brought us to the abode of our friends—a palace-kind of dwelling, in the midst of outward grandeur of nature, for we look out upon widely extended works of God, and the whole is of this description. It is pleasant to find, in the midst of this earthly splendour, the true riches. Much I admire the operation of the invisible Spirit, who thus displays the triumphs God obtains over souls, however circumstanced. May he obtain to himself advancing displays of his glory in the earth! All other things are comparatively of no value. In our hearts I trust this is experimentally felt, and that we would find in our Lord our heaven, our world, our All in all. To this high standard, my dear William, we are constrained to press by the very life which is in us, which, descending from heaven, tends to its source, and can never be satisfied out of the Lord. Happy is it for us that we can possess the holy opened source so freely pouring forth the riches of the everlasting covenant. Amidst the various scenes of the pathway, the thought of home is cheering,

how much more the privilege of looking within the veil. Well, my dear friend, let us patiently wait and diligently press onward, until we rest where we would be! Farewell. May Jesus bless you.

M. S.

LXII.

Endeavour to rise into the high Regions—Satan's Power bounded—Power of Jesus' Name—B——'s Publication.

I DEEPLY regret that your circumstances still wear the same appearance. It is an unhappy thing that vice should triumph, but such is this evil world, and in this way it is that the Lord's children suffer. In respect to church matters public events are of a character which seem to indicate great changes, and we are manifestly called upon to wait and stand prepared for those dispensations, and we are learning one of the most profitable of all lessons; that is, contentment with the divine government, and an increase of simplicity in the promise which engages that the children of promise shall never be left by this powerful and heavenly friend. We may confide in Him for daily bread, and believe that whatever evil now exists, or ere long shall appear, we are sheltered beneath the living presence of our Lord, and shall lack no good thing. O may we have an energy of faith that shall answer to the measure of trial and glorify our God. Now that we see the gathering cloud, may we realize in peace our clearest sufficient Refuge! O how should we bless him for what he is to us, let us endeavour to rise into the high regions, the proper place of our abode, and looking *down* upon the stormy atmos-

pHERE in quiet, rejoice in our experience of what the apostle testifies,—“our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ.”

We are here much as when I last wrote. In my school of boys, which, you know, during the last year I have had to myself, there is a promise of some blessing; they are very fond of coming, and the letter of the revelation is laid up in their minds, it may prove a blessing in some future day.

The communication in your letter before the last affected, but did not surprise me. I refer to what you say respecting the mental malady under which so many persons at present suffer; we have had many instances within our own knowledge. It appears to us one of the demonstrations given of the awful prevalence of the divine judgment, and of the permitted rage of the enemy. Satanic power, though bounded, is fearful, and when exercised over a vassal to be more willingly subjected to him, and confederate with him in desperate revolt against God, we need not wonder that it assumes a terrible expression. Amidst the judgments denounced on Israel for transgression is this, “I will send them madness.” When our Lord’s first advent was come, the power of Satan was allowed, in possessions, &c., and giving opportunity for the display of the power of Jesus’ name, and we are to expect that previous to the second advent—glory a similar method of the divine government will be adopted. That he should in any instance touch a *redeemed* one, may serve to shew how much all deliverances are of grace, and assuredly we know that such influence shall not prevail beyond what is for good, as we see in the case of Job. Let us, however, my beloved friend, learn the blessedness of living in simplicity of dependence upon our triumphant Prince, and try to maintain the spirit of nearness and love and communion

effectual and sure, and finding the healing of his peace, be glad in our King.

I hope, my dear M——, that we are making increase. Notwithstanding the waves that beat against our course, our stedfast purpose is to maintain the way—and this purpose being the offspring of indwelling Omnipotence, must prevail. How blessed a repose is given to us in the knowledge of the great doctrine of grace! I cannot imagine how any one not holding these views of the covenant can retain any degree of equal peace. I see nothing that can sustain under the sense of remaining corruption, and the assaults of the powers of darkness, but only the *everlasting purpose*. Here is the remedy for doubt and fear, and here the resting-place amidst all the fluctuations of time and sense. It is evidently the “strong tower,” that “name of the Lord” into which the righteous flee and are safe. Jehovah manifested in Christ, as exalted in unchangeable intention towards the blood-bought family of his grace!—this is a revelation worthy the greatness and sovereignty of the Lord, and such as may well demand from angels and from men the combined tributes of adoration and praise.

O let us, my dear friend, tune our harps to these exalted notes, and all our powers unite in telling of our Saviour’s power. Surely we know it? Great have been the discoveries afforded to us by the light reflected in our fellow-pilgrims, but much more the testimony which we carry within ourselves; for He hath torn away the gates of brass and bars of iron. He hath subdued kingdoms within us, and wrested the prey from the mighty,—nay, he hath done what beggars all expression, and leaves us nothing to say but Holy! holy! holy! May we bend at his feet with unfeigned surrender of all, and never be wearied in the delightful work which ere long shall engage us for ever in higher and better strains!

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by which safety and victory are ours. Have you read B——'s publication, exposing his own temptations, and the workings of Satan during the time of his association with I——: it is a very awful exposure, but well calculated to rouse the upright to vigilance and simplicity. O how much we need divine keeping; and how safely we are kept within the everlasting arms!

Farewell, may we all soon be gathered home.

Your faithfully affectionate friend, M. S.

LXIII.

Important Token.

MY DEAR W——,

* * * * * We know that the time is short, and to accomplish our stewardship, wherever it may be, appointed in all we have to do. Your journey, my friend, has been one marked by singular dispensations of love and honour for the Lord, and we must admit that a mixture of pain has been one of the most important tokens of that distinguishing favour; keeping your spirit childlike and dependent. O may we have our simplicity increased; and the portion of our soul being the Lord Himself, may we want no more, seeing He is enough in Himself. It is easy thus to speak, but sometimes we do not feel accordingly; yet we will be grateful for the sound *judgment* and the ability to say that all this we *desire* fully to feel and prove * * *

May your crown of rejoicing be bright in the great day! You know the Lord has given you some precious

gems of his, who are now in his presence above, and it may be he will add more,—Amen ! May you, my dear W——, see the fruit, or labour in faith, knowing that the bread cast upon the waters shall be found after many days !

Believe me ever your affectionate friend in Jesus' bonds,

M. S.

LXIV.

Downy Nest—Welcome Reflections.

I VERY gladly take the opportunity which a passing sickness affords for greeting you thus, my beloved friend * * * * I hope you are growing into a greater measure of comfort in your place of ministration. The storm of trial which came against you at the time of your last letter could not last long ; men generally exhaust themselves by desperation * * * * I suppose the tender watchfulness of your heavenly Father resolved that neither you nor yours should begin to think that a downy nest on earth was to receive you, and that in the entrance upon your new course you should be reminded that your *end* is glory, honour, and immortality in the presence of God above.

Your pathway, my dear W——, has been wonderfully marked by divine love ever since first your heart was touched by the Holy Ghost. No doubt what you have passed through at —— is amongst those infinitely gracious purposes, and will be found numbered amidst your choicest covenant-experiences. We must travel the way our Master trod, and walk where prophets and apostles have gone before us. The rapid approach of

the period when we shall cease to have any of these responsibilities here below seem to shut the eyes upon all transitory things, and to open the affections increasingly to the interests of Jesus' kingdom.

My dear friend, let those reflections be welcome to your soul.

M. S.

LXV.

Fellowship—Why cast down—God's deep Convictions bitter Waters—The everlasting Purpose—Watchfulness—Opportunities—Labour for Children.

How long a time has again elapsed, my dearest M——, since the converse was held which, I trust, is mutually precious to us, and which this sweet mode of communicating enables us to realize. Multiplied engagements, I suppose, occupy us both; yet we should find an hour for one another; and I confess that I am sorry on my part that this has not been done. Meet I trust we do in the Spirit; but there is a blessing accompanies the interchange of sentiment; and when I read over your last, I cannot but think that your soul waits and sighs for the refreshment of communion. The frame of your mind indeed may at this time be very different from that in which you then wrote to me; but whether our sky is serene and bright, or is overcast with darkness and clouds, *fellowship* is still our privilege, and the possessions of the saints are multiplied by impartation. A messenger, then, fraught with the subject of redeeming love, must at all times and in every season be welcome.

I might say, when I lay down your letter, "Why art thou cast down, and why art thou disquieted within

thee?" Every sentiment speaks somewhat of grateful wonder, and your whole heart seems to swell with adoring praise, and yet you complain of heaviness, and bewail insensibility! But so it is, my dear M——; the further we advance towards the fruition of the kingdom, so much the more do we apprehend our own vileness and the glory of the eternal grace; and sometimes under this experience, although we make our boast in the Lord, yet our language partakes of sorrow. None could understand these seeming contradictions, but that the Spirit is the all-sufficient teacher of his people. But I trust that we, my dear M——, can interpret the ways of the Lord, and see in them all infinite wisdom and never-ceasing love.

It is necessary that we should experimentally know the depth of iniquity that is in us. Too long we *talk* these things, even supposing that we duly feel them; but we find as we advance that there is something very peculiar in the subjection of the heart, under the power of *God's* deep convictions upon the soul; and that a wide and extensive view is opened to us, in this light, that is altogether afflicting and humiliating.

It appears to be the evident intention of grace to bring us to an *individual* retrospect of transgressions, and, by leading us back into the paths through which we have journeyed, to awaken within us the exercise of contrition for every smallest evil which we may discover; and thus to help us in tracing up the streams of that foul and monstrous spring, which must be deadly indeed when capable of sending forth such bitter waters!

O blessed be God for that tree of life, which, cast into these deeps, shall sustain all, and make the very sense of misery work to the advancement of holiness and peace. The power and virtue of Jesus' grace is unspeakable! Gladly may we hasten to the provision thus

effectual and sure, and finding the healing of his peace, be glad in our King.

I hope, my dear M——, that we are making increase. Notwithstanding the waves that beat against our course, our stedfast purpose is to maintain the way—and this purpose being the offspring of indwelling Omnipotence, must prevail. How blessed a repose is given to us in the knowledge of the great doctrine of grace! I cannot imagine how any one not holding these views of the covenant can retain any degree of equal peace. I see nothing that can sustain under the sense of remaining corruption, and the assaults of the powers of darkness, but only the *everlasting purpose*. Here is the remedy for doubt and fear, and here the resting-place amidst all the fluctuations of time and sense. It is evidently the “strong tower,” that “name of the Lord” into which the righteous flee and are safe. Jehovah manifested in Christ, as exalted in unchangeable intention towards the blood-bought family of his grace!—this is a revelation worthy the greatness and sovereignty of the Lord, and such as may well demand from angels and from men the combined tributes of adoration and praise.

O let us, my dear friend, tune our harps to these exalted notes, and all our powers unite in telling of our Saviour’s power. Surely we know it? Great have been the discoveries afforded to us by the light reflected in our fellow-pilgrims, but much more the testimony which we carry within ourselves; for He hath torn away the gates of brass and bars of iron. He hath subdued kingdoms within us, and wrested the prey from the mighty,—nay, he hath done what beggars all expression, and leaves us nothing to say but Holy! holy! holy! May we bend at his feet with unfeigned surrender of all, and never be wearied in the delightful work which ere long shall engage us for ever in higher and better strains!

Your present situation may be one greatly tending to the growth of these views. The retirement and loss of external means, though in some respects painful, will many times introduce the soul into more intimate meditations upon our soul's beloved, and make the interviews with heaven the more spiritual and abstracted. But when this blessed effect follows, it must be the consequence of much watchfulness, since there is no doubt that the *natural* fruit of such deprivation is rather the misery of lukewarmness.

Have you any opportunities of testifying of the Lord? But why do I ask such a question—there must be opportunity anywhere; for no immortal creature can be within our reach without having a claim upon us; and I trust your heart acknowledges this claim, and is ready to meet the starving necessity of a sinner. Discouragement should not press us down. Remember the passage you used to be very fond of—"Blessed are they who sow beside all waters." Perhaps the favour you bore to that portion of the word was indicative of what you were bound to feel in a special way in the appointed scenes of your pilgrimage. And now, my dear M——, you may have a calling to verify the truth in your own conduct and exertions. The young minds of your charge will most likely be very impressible, at least with the letter of truth; and this is a blessing not to be despised, for the materials seem thus to be laid together in merciful preparation against the communication of the life-giving fire of the Spirit. Labour then, my dear M——, with diligent and humble faith. You are particularly formed for children, and have always been acceptable to them; and this is a special gift. In the knowledge which may be given through your efforts one of those little ones may rejoice through eternity, and not impossibly be instrumental to many more.

May Jesus smile upon every attempt you make of this nature, and give you an abundant acknowledgment in your own heart. Farewell, my dearest M——. I pray God to bless and uphold you, and to grant us a reunion in his blessed presence!

Believe me ever your most affectionate mother and friend,

M. S.

LXVI.

Family Sickness—Sacred Cabinet—The thing which interrupts our Joys—Union of temporal with spiritual Prosperity—Dealings with God—Sympathy in Prayer.

I AM very glad, my dear M——, to embrace this opportunity for sending you a few lines, which would not have been deferred so long had not repeated indisposition, with other pressing claims, prevented my writing. Perhaps you know in some measure what a house of mourning ours has been, and indeed still remains, though a merciful alleviation has been granted for some days.

The Typhus has been very prevalent in the town, and has been the messenger of departure from this world to many amongst us. It pleased the Lord to visit our house with the trial, so far as the infliction of the disease. Our dear Mr. C—— has been a great sufferer from its effects, after having been confined under its tedious continuance for many weeks, and at present is in a most reduced and uncertain state of health. His frame is like a skeleton, and his strength seems entirely exhausted; and what increases the evil to him is the impossibility of giving him the usual me-

dicines, since these immediately fly to his head and bring on his other dangerous complaint.

The week after the fever attacked him, one of our servants sickened in it, and another room became the chamber of confinement and suffering. A few days succeeding to this my dear little Maria was seized, as we thought, with the same disease; but it proved to be a dangerous sore throat, attended with fever and a weakness which has reduced her to a very low state.

Soon after this, another of our servants was taken ill, being threatened with pleurisy, and incapable of giving us much more aid.

At the beginning of this trial, when Mr. C—— came home in his sickness, I had been confined a week under medical aid, and was then laid on my sofa in great suffering, and my sister, you know, is always an invalid, and very unfit to make any exertion.

This simple relation of our circumstances, my beloved M——, will testify that the hand of our God has been upon us; and I am sure you will picture to yourself our distress, and what anxiety and efforts were necessary. None indeed can sufficiently describe them. Blessed be our Lord, however, he was with us in the fire, and did not leave us to sustain it in natural strength! I was raised to a sufficiency of strength to wait upon Maria, though with much difficulty; and my sister has been supported in a marvellous way, for night and day no rest could be taken. At present, thanks be to God, all seem on the recovery; but our beloved friend and pastor is most uncertain to our judgment, and wears so much the appearance of decline as greatly to affect us all. But Jesus Christ is shepherd of his flock and keeper of his saints!—no desolation can injure where the shadow of this Great Rock is found; and in the waste howling

wilderness he spreads a table for his own, and feeds them in plenteousness of peace.

Many affecting considerations, however, cannot but present themselves, when we view the possibility of a loss being suffered in this long-favoured pasture, so fearful and trying. An apprehension too, of provocation, in the visitation, exercises the soul with a mixture of grief which is of a peculiar nature. And whether this thought rests upon the flock or comes home in personal examination, 'tis one that must occasion a sigh, and calls forth many a rising, heavenwards, of an afflicted and enquiring kind. But "all things shall work together for good;" this is the pledge of him that cannot lie. And even though correction for sin may be in the cup, the sweets of everlasting love may be mixed in the bitterest draught. This is a comforting reflection, and in the midst of the tossings of nature and the correction of grace, I find my soul throws itself upon this resting-place, and desires there to repose. 'Twas here that David tasted much of spiritual consolation, when he exclaimed, "In the multitude of the thoughts I had in my heart, thy comforts, O Lord, refreshed my soul." O who would be a stranger to the pure delights of enlarged views of the promise *in Christ Jesus!* Here every encouragement of Jehovah seems locked up in a sacred cabinet, where no thief can break through to steal, and no circumstance prevail to change. Were his mercies dependant upon any thing in the poor fluctuating creature, how sandy and miserable would be our foundations. But sealed to us in him who is Alpha and Omega, what is there that can shake the christian's inheritance? and what is there which *ought* to move his faith? With the apostle we have ground enough to say, "None of these things move me!"

I know indeed, my dear M——, that there is a thing

which, though it alters not the purpose of the Lord, will change the measure of our joys—*the wretched plant of sin!* Where this is suffered, the joys of the Spirit are blighted; nay, they must be wholly withheld, for in this respect we may say, “What fellowship hath light with darkness?” Nor can it be that God the Holy Ghost should reside where uncleanness and iniquity are allowed. Freely he comes in to cleanse and purify, but certainly *veils* himself when his vassals are perverse and wandering. O may we know this in such power that nothing may be so grievous to us as that which grieves Him; and no circumstance distress us equal to the affliction of having in any measure suffered the privation of God’s greatest love! It is a blessed witness to our state, when we can feel the joyfulness of the covenant, and the sweetness of its sanctifying efficacy. This combination proves to us the work of the regenerating Spirit, and will always make the wilderness to blossom as the rose!

I rejoice in all I hear of your prosperity—not that I should joy in it were it confined to temporal advantages. The increase of this world’s good will never compensate for the loss of spiritual advancement, and very frequently proves injurious to our best interests. But I joy in the union of these two in the lot which God has given you; and that the comforts of earth have not made you forget that you are a stranger and a pilgrim here.

O my dear M——, never lose that remembrance. All here will soon fade as a vision of the night, and the events of time sink into oblivion; excepting only as they have had an influence upon our eternal prospects; and it is well for us when the Lord is pleased to keep these recollections lively in our hearts. With some he does it by many external afflictions; with others, by

strong operations of his inward and hidden voice. But in whatever way this work is effected, 'tis all of and from him, and no doubt suited in every instance to the soul with which he is in fellowship. May he always rise within us, sanctifying all his ways—so shall we at last, when we stand on Mount Zion, praise him alike for joys and sorrows, for conflicts and triumphs.

Many interesting things I could comment upon had I time: but I dare not enter upon subjects which would lead me out further than our poor invalids can spare me. Their state apparently requires, if any thing, an increase of attention, both as to nourishment and society, and most of my hours seem properly claimed amongst them, going from room to room. Pray for us,—in this way we may meet in sympathy—and 'tis a valuable way, in which I believe much blessing might be obtained for each other's souls. Ere long I trust all Christ's own will be at home, safely housed in the mansions of light and in the fruition of God. But here we have precious graces to produce and exercise in the glorious power of the Holy Ghost, and faith and patience are called out to victories which shall bring honour to our Lord. O may they abound in us all!

Farewell, my ever dear M——; the blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ be ever upon you!

I am in truth your most affectionate mother and friend in Him,

M. S.

LXVII.

Universal Presence—Satisfaction in God—Importunate Desire of Faith—Short Appeals—Call to Vigilance—Walk seriously—Departure of a Friend—Seek an abundant Entrance—Reading the Scriptures.

I INTEND, my dear M——, to embrace the opportunity of sending this letter in the parcel which our mutual friend is about to prepare for you; and although it is perhaps a week before the time, I think it better to take the hour which offers this evening, lest I should, as is often the case, be unexpectedly hindered by engagements. It is a privilege to hold communion in any form with our fellow-pilgrims; but I am obliged to be more scanty in my epistolary communications than I would be, because I have multiplied avocations, and must distribute hours and minutes as seems to be the most pressing claim presented.

O how often do I feel as if I would divide myself asunder, and so discharge a double portion of needful work! But there is one whose universal presence shall supply the lack of human power, and by whom every demand of the Church's interests can be entirely met in all sufficient fulness.

The experience of personal inefficiency even for our limited sphere of action is very useful; it keeps us in the recollection of our own dependance, and tends to raise up the expectant acts of faith to the fountain of all our covenant mercies. Whatever then may tend to the advancement of this christian simplicity must be good, and more especially to such dispositions as are naturally disposed to lean upon the support which creatures yield. The great end of all our exercises here below is evidently the bringing of the heart into satis-

faction with what God can give, and what he is in himself; and if we mark the dispensations by which our pathway is attended we shall read the voice of the rod, or of the smile as fraught with the living purpose. Is it answered, my dear M——? for this is the point to which our attention should be given. And can we say that dealings sent in this design are followed with the expected fruit of a more devoted and single heart.

O how importunate is the quickened desire of faith for more and more of gracious productions to be found; but not more importunate than is the eternal cultivator of his plant, for He cometh day by day seeking fruit! If then requirement from Christ and longings in our own renewed soul combine so strongly, surely there must and will be somewhat found? Yet we are sadly slow in coming to that state of ripened experience which should attend us, and quickening reflections are always needful, and to be desired. For this end I often think a little short appeal put home to the heart is very useful, that in the midst of observations, &c., which we may make in too customary a manner, we may stop short and look to the degree of personal feeling that we possess.

Never, my dear M——, did a greater call to this vigilance exist around us, than in the present state of human things. It appears to me that now is exhibited the fulfilment of Christ's declaration respecting the rage of Satan, who, in the last days, should go forth with great fury, knowing that he hath but a short time. Every description of dark and malicious hatred against Christ by sinners seems now to be in measure manifested. The proud presumption which is expressly to mark the last days is a conspicuous feature of this time. Heresy and division strive to enter upon the precincts of Christ' Church, and endeavour to defile and rend it. Infidelity

makes daring attempts to rear its monstrous form, and anarchy and confusion threaten to desolate the human scene! When contemplating these things with the eye of faith, I think we may read the truths most affecting to the believer's soul, and that as the children of God we are especially required to bring forth those dispositions of heart which belong to the spiritual life.

Notwithstanding the wildest uproar of the powers of darkness, we know that “the Lord reigneth.” Messiah will maintain his kingdom, and He has a voice that can confound his adversaries and still the madness of the people. Yet his saints are required to humble themselves under his mighty hand, and, whilst they rejoice in the greatness of their eternal Lord, to feel themselves regardful of his call to stronger faith and holiness in themselves.

It is our part, my dear M——, to walk seriously and with strict attention to the trimming of our lamps, that, in whatever way he may be pleased to reveal himself, we may be prepared to meet him, and that no accursed and provoking thing may be found in us to grieve his spirit or move him to jealousy.

Such reflections are my familiar companions at this time. I express them to you, my dear M——, that you may unite with me in renewed dedication to the cross, and that we may have one mind and heart under the visitations by which the nation or the church may be tried.

The importance, too, of lively exercises, I have seen clearly exhibited in the affecting departure of a dear friend here, of whose unexpected death probably you will have been informed. There were some circumstances attendant upon the scene which rendered it very affecting. I do not mean as to the relative ties by which she was surrounded, although in leaving two such little ones there must have been much to try her affec-

tions ; but the whole of her earnest feeling was absorbed in the interests of her soul, about the safety of which she was solicitous and unhappy. She feared that an internal declension had been the miserable case with her, and that a lukewarmness which she had felt for some months had been the consequence of having grieved the spirit.

Sometimes she dreaded that her profession had not been upright, and that her former feelings had been delusive ;—power to pray or meditate was wholly withheld for a considerable time ; and Satan, taking advantage of the darkness which the Lord suffered to surround her, harassed her with perpetual terrors and deep depression ! You may suppose, my beloved friend, how distressing the scene was to us all ; but in the very darkness light was evident to such as attended her, for whatever might have been her state previously, she evidenced under her affliction the deepest self-abasement—gave glory to God for all he did—exhorted and pleaded with others, and manifested the most earnest longings for the light of his countenance to be restored. These longings were graciously answered ere she was called away ; she rejoiced in the relief of some near communion granted to her two nights before the day of her death ; and from that period had more of faith, though occasionally interrupted by returning clouds. The last afternoon was one of equal and heavenly peace, in which she expressed her firm persuasion of an interest in redeeming love, and her full deliverance from the misery which had depressed her. She gently breathed away her spirit in holy composure, and fell asleep in the utterance of short expressive prayers which seemed to burst from her heart !

O my dear M——, how awakening and how affecting are such examples ! The Lord's faithfulness we see is

always the same; and his tender remembrance of his children constant as himself; yet he will chasten for any departure of heart, and always takes occasion to shew us how sad are the consequences of any degree of lukewarmness allowed in the heart. Surely we shall be quickened by such evidences, and shall see how needful it is to live in the fellowship of the Spirit, and to guard against every infectious disease by which (so long as we are in the body) we are ever surrounded.

May we, my dear M——, be stedfastly purposed to seek an *abundant* entrance into the heavenly kingdom; nor ever be satisfied without the consciousness of that loving smile upon our path, which we have often found to be better than life itself.

I enter into your present circumstances with unfeigned sympathy, and with the most affectionate interest; you are placed where much glory to the Lord may abound through you, and I bless his holy name that hitherto grace has been according to your day! I trust that the young ones under your care will remember the counsel given, and taste with increasing delight the sweetness of that manna which you are appointed to administer. And great will be your joy, my dear M——, if you see them round the throne, as the crown and rejoicing of your soul, and of praise to the blood of Christ.

I need not say, ‘Be not weary in well doing,’ you have a principle within which must spring up unto everlasting life, and by which we are always constrained to activity and delight in Jesus’ work!

I was much gratified and pleased by the heads you sent me of your first attempt in Genesis; it is very well done; and I hope you will persevere in reading the scriptures in this method; I find it extremely useful to myself and others.

I have been induced by the request of many of my friends to purpose printing the five books of Moses as soon as I have gone through them, and then you can have a copy, and will see how we are proceeding, and if the Lord please I shall endeavour to go through the whole scriptures in the same way.

Let me hear from you more frequently, you have none more affectionately solicitous for every best blessing to light upon you ; for I think of and sincerely pray for you with many earnest desires. O may we meet when Jesus comes, and dwell for ever in one blissful house !

Believe me, my dear M——, your ever attached mother and friend in Him,

M. S.

LXVIII.

Omnipotent Work of Grace—Retracing the Ways past—Proposed Plan for Correspondence and Communion.

You have long been in my debt, my dear friend, but I cannot let the box go without a few lines ; although I am at this moment full of business of the most pressing kind ; affection, however, breaks through many hindrances, and I seize a passing opportunity with gladness.

I hope you are well in all respects, and that the prosperity of Christ's blessing is around your path. It would give me great pleasure to hear from you, and to know by the testimony of your own pen that you are rejoicing in the light of God's countenance ; but I believe your engagements may be pressing, and the little spare time you may possess is better dedicated to the near communion of the soul with Christ than to any communication

with any creature. I always feel fearful lest the pressing anxiety which may be expressed by those we love should induce to a neglect of the more important claims of our dear Redeemer, and I would at all times gladly yield my desires to the better interest which is found whilst talking with our God. In this sweet exercise I hope, my dear friend, that you are making progress. My thoughts very frequently take a flight to the little room I fancy you to be sitting within ; and many prayers are with you that it may please the Lord when our pilgrimage is past to unite us in the inheritance for which we long. How empty, vain, and unsatisfactory are all other hopes and pursuits ! My mind and heart turn away with increased distaste from the things which are present, excepting only as they may be connected with the interests of our dear Lord. And truly we may pray that the Holy Spirit would carry on his triumphs within us in this respect, and empty out from the heart every affection that will not rest there in harmony with the will and purpose of God.

Oh ! my dear friend, what a work of omnipotence is that which reduces the spirit, regulating the stubborn affections, which are all creaturely and excessive ; and setting up the tranquil kingdom of holiness, so contrary to the propensities of our depraved nature ! And how may we stand amazed, and adore the unsearchable wisdom, the unwearied love, to which we are debtors for this grace !

I assure you my soul is much affected by these views. I frequently retrace the ways that are past, 'till I am lost in humiliating sense of myself, and in astonished praise of my dear Master and Lord, and I hope these are exercises which shall prove so many anticipations of a more extensive sight—so self-abasing and yet so transporting.

It has just occurred to me that you may be willing in spirit and pursuit to join a meeting I have just instituted amongst my matured flock for the study of the scriptures. I have often wished that some good plan for this purpose could be adopted, regretting that the bible is repeated and read without that degree of profit which should accrue, and also that too little of *personal*, mental exertion was seen in our fold. For the attainment of this object I have thought it good for us to agree to read (we will say) Genesis through in a month, having a sheet of paper and a pen and ink laid beside us with these following heads written out, and a space under each for the insertion of the observations suitably made upon each, viz., By whom is the book written? What is the meaning of title? What eras are most remarkable? What principal events? What prophecies? What types? What eminent characters? What connection with profane history?

At the end of the month we are to meet and read the general observations, at which time each person is to say, how the prophecies have been fulfilled or will be, *why* the types are so, and in what the persons are remarkable, with any other remark needful, and a correct copy drawn out by each.

Now I have many here who do this heartily, perhaps thirty or forty, and some at a distance who write their remarks to me, and upon this pursuit our correspondence is formed.

I think it will be useful to all in many ways, and I believe will be a pursuit very suitable to your mind and feeling. Let me hear from you upon this. Farewell, my beloved friend, the Lord cherish and keep you ever! Believe me your most affectionate mother and friend,

M. S.

LXIX.

Narrow Line—Resolute Watchfulness.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I EARNESTLY wish it may please the Lord Jesus to sanctify this our new undertaking to his glory; for whatever we enter upon should be thus blest to us by seeking the smiling approbation of our beloved Master, without whom we are not justifiable in taking one step, for “whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” This is a narrow line, my beloved friend, too little regarded, and but few of us live unto this simple gospel precept. I am shocked when I think how careless the flock of Christ are, and how they take occasion by thought, word, and deed, to transgress from the simplicity of holiness, of which our dear Lord set us such a blessed example. I am wearied with talk and profession. O that real, inward, sanctifying possession might more adorn us, as the lovely and beautiful object chosen to be the Saviour’s bride, and made so by that wonderful communication of the Spirit which joins us intimately to the Lord!

There is nothing to be attained to in our difficult way without resolute watchfulness upon ourselves; and seeing we have so fierce, so foul, so inveterate an enemy, ever keeping his eye with malicious rage upon us; and also that we have so almighty, so holy, so compassionate a Saviour beholding us everywhere,—O what manner of people ought we to be in all holy conversation!

My own soul’s experience bids me press my beloved little flock to more strenuous efforts for the eternal prize; and amongst those especially dear to me, I would

urge you, my dear friend, to watch and pray that no man take thy crown. Blessed be the Lord! none can take it out of his all-powerful arm. But yet by such exhortation we are taught the urgent necessity laying upon us for diligence. It is always upon my heart to wish that there was more communication of spiritual truth amongst your circle. Whether it can ever be effected or not I cannot tell; but I know it would be much better if it were so, and that a habit of guarding the lips and encouraging the Spirit's sweet visits were sought. Believe me that the more I love you, the more my affections tend this way—to wish for you, as for myself, that we might *live* by the faith of the Son of God. O that all the dignified sweetness of the saints, with the purity of the blessed, might rest upon us, and that it might be perceived undoubtedly, by all, that we had been with Jesus!

Whenever I am able I will write to you once a week, the Lord enabling me; and let me desire an answer some part of the six days. Farewell; stand fast in the almighty strength of our Almighty Jesus. May he evermore bless and nourish you!

Believe me ever yours most affectionately in Jesus' bonds,

M. S.

LXX.

An Enquiry—Suggestions—Offer to assist.

You will perhaps be surprised, my dear M——, to receive an answer to your last so much sooner than we usually interchange letters; and indeed I should not probably have stirred up my languid body to this em-

ployment at present, but that my mind and heart are full of affectionate anxiety on your account. I cannot consider your present circumstances without much concern, both as it respects your present and your future interests; and I have had you in my thoughts ever since I knew of so material an alteration in your family. I simply write at this time to put this question, "Do you mean to remain where you are?"

I know that you are placed in a situation wherein great claims upon your affection are presented around you; and possibly you may consider it your duty to continue where you are, although your own comforts must be much impaired; but there may be circumstances rendering it desirable to remove, and if so, tell me. I have had many opportunities wherein I could have placed you in the midst of the rich pastures of grace, and with many temporal comforts; but I have always looked upon your situation as providential and important, and therefore never suffered myself to interfere; but now that your own soul seems to be put into a *worse* than parched wilderness, and to be exposed to the depths of infidelity, I stand in serious apprehension for your spiritual advancement, fearing it may be endangered; and I begin to question whether or not it is your duty to remain. No consideration could make it your duty but one; and that is, the prospect of standing successfully against the floods of iniquity, *to the advantage of those* who are under your influence. If this is the case, perhaps the Lord keeps you for this part of his ordained work; but if it is not so, and you find your efforts are not so acknowledged, it would then appear a more decided requirement to quit where you dwell—to come out, and be separate. My beloved girl, I only suggest these things; the Lord must and will be your counsellor, and I earnestly hope his coun-

sels wlll be legible, and your obedience prompt and upright, whatever may be the nature of his call.

You are aware that the Lord opened for me a new scene of service last summer, and that hereby I have been brought into connection with many families wherein the interests of Jesus are the prevailing pursuit. From these quarters I am constantly receiving application for some disciples of the cross to fill the various stations of their service, and the Lord has hitherto acknowledged all that I have sent forth. About two months since I was requested to send to a dear child of God (if I possibly could) a person in whom the care of the household might be reposed with confidence, and all the particulars of the place were such as exactly suited you. Of course I did not name you, for the reasons I have assigned, and now perhaps it may be engaged. I think I could also obtain the situation of *superintending* children; but I make no efforts till I hear from you; and if any such thoughts are now revolving in your mind, I shall expect to hear from you, as soon as you can conveniently write, with a plain statement of what you would require, and what you would do.

Do not, my beloved girl, think that I wish to unsettle you: my only feeling is love for you, and a wish for your mind's peace and your soul's increase. You will, I am sure, understand the affections which dictate this hasty letter; and if I hear nothing from you, I shall conclude that you are satisfied to remain, as believing it is the Lord's will.

You will see that I am writing with difficulty. I have had a violent return of bilious attack, which has left me again very much reduced, and brought me to the repetition of my severe medicines. My labours are very much limited, but my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour! What can I ask more? Surely his loving-

kindness is unsearchable, and his consolations are satisfying! O, my dear M——, he is a faithful Master and a rich and tender Husband, in whose smiles there is life; and whether we wake in this world or in the reserved glory, there is enough in the beams of his countenance to give rest and peace. Be on your watchtower, and open your heart in the loving confidence which you are called to exercise. There is no lack of readiness or grace in our soul's Beloved; and when we live closely reposing upon Him, there must be great prosperity and rising joy. We shall soon, I trust, meet in the eternal experience of all that He is and has, and then our tribute of everlasting praise shall be uninterrupted and full.

I am ever your affectionate mother and friend,
M. S.

LXXI.

Trials and Sorrows, and purpose of God in them—Publications...Questions answered.

THE first thing which I will express to you, my beloved friend, is the desire I have had to reply to your dear and interesting packet, immediately after reading its contents. I tell you so because I know this will give a pleasurable sensation to your affectionate heart, into which I would fain be ever pouring the oil of gladness, that it might gently distil and heal every wound which it has received. O how efficacious to such blessed ends is a provision thus extracted from Jesus' wounds, and how gracious the feeling excited by the assurance that it drops freely and without any to obstruct its application to His rescued ones!

The late season is a very busy one to me. On occasions of this description, we have more of meetings and of public and private means, not leaving me time for any engagements distinct from immediate and surrounding claims. I therefore could not write before, but I could do that which you desire,—I could carry you in my heart in fellowship with my soul's Beloved ; and my lips also uttered your wants and interests before Him, on the interesting day when we rejoice in Him as our Risen Sacrifice. I trust He listened to us both, and that we each received the dear pledge of his love with peace. O my beloved friend, how amply has he supplied us in our sorrowful steps with antidotes to grief, when he is with us where we tread !—and how truly can we, in the retrospect of past afflictions, realize His faithfulness, and say from the heart, “ It is good for me to have been afflicted.”

It is by the experience of sorrow, that we are prepared for sympathy with each other, and in this we have cause to be thankful. Sure I am that there is no condition which does so abundantly prove the heart-conquering grace of Jesus, as that which belongs to our hours of distress. And so likewise I believe that there is a very peculiar stream of relative fellowship opened out of a broken heart towards such as have known adversity. Thus, as our own Lord has opened His own bosom through sorrow, as the source whence all our comforts flow, He has conformed us to himself, and, in this way constituted us sympathizing helps to each other. May our trials, my sister, of every description, so belong to the means by which we are made like our Lord, and may we, like Him, go out of our own to bear the burdens of others ! The more I look on Jesus in this His wondrous disinterestedness and tender feeling to us, so much the more am I filled with longing that

an increase of His mind may be mine—and now I unite you with myself, and ask that a similar baptism may rest on your head. Many and great indeed have been your sorrows, and my bosom has taken them all into it with tenderest love, and so love you more. And we will add to this, that many and great have been your mercies, and the Lord delights in the gratitude of His children; and we will not refuse to take our harp or sing one of Zion's songs even in this strange land. Every stroke is a token of love, for each one is designed to break our bondage to the creature. There is a pretty sentiment expressed in a hymn which I trust we feel to be our own—that these strokes

“ Do but rivet and strengthen the chains
That bind me, my Saviour, to Thee !”

No doubt we have needed such dispensations as give a strong impulse to the heart in its flight heavenwards; because, notwithstanding our fervency of character, which might seem friendly to the vigorous ascent of our desires, we have by the same disposition strong propensity to those on earth whom we love.

Thank you, my beloved friend, for all you have written, and let our mutual confidence be ever expressed. We have however a great and welcome responsibility laid upon us by the notice which our Lord has condescended to take of us; and it is well to understand how we best answer his claim: I would say we do so most acceptably when we joyfully credit that His heart *is love to us*, and when we bring Him blessing and confidence from our heart and lips. Delighting as He does in our prosperity, it must needs be delight to Him when He sees our bosom glowing with a holy trust, such as His character and dealings to us deserve. And although sometimes He must needs hear sighs

uttered from our soul, I would that they should never be unattended with at least the dove-like murmurings of love and rest in Him. O yes, my friend, he shall have this tribute from us ; and as He has put us in the clefts of the rock, he shall thence hear our voice ! Perhaps, my sister, your future days on earth may be more equally cheered by the beams of heavenly peace than in the days that are past. I anticipate that thus it will be. Your past and present sorrows have been preparations for more simple enjoyment of those communications which come immediately from the Lord ; and as it has pleased Him to give us an ability to be of help to others in the way, I believe that your individual exercises have formed a part of the discipline which it is needful for us to know, ere we work with *simplicity*. There is much of self-renunciation, and much of tender forbearance requisite in ministering to poor souls for Jesus' sake, and this we learn by what is in the first instance dispensed into our own breast. How thankful you will be in coming hours, when you are able to say, 'Sympathy for this case I learnt by experience of my own heart ; and hope and expectation for it, I have also learnt by experience of the matchless grace which has abounded unto me.' It appears that this was particularly Paul's feeling, and, like him, we may esteem it a glory, if called to fill up that which remains of the sufferings of Christ in our flesh, for his body's sake.

I trust a blessing of an abundant kind will be given to your publication ; the motive will be acknowledged of the Lord ; and I think the writings themselves calculated to arrest the attention of the reader. I have been much interested in those before me ; my opinion respecting the mode of introducing spiritual truths through the medium of a romantic channel, has been, and is, generally speaking, unfavourable ; for usually

the story seems to absorb the attention, and the mind is not thereby prepared to relish more sober reading. It has seemed to me too much to concede, and in some respects not a gospel weapon. But in you, my dear friend, I feel that there is a chastened mixture, and that the spiritual lesson is *incorporated* in the whole; so that I can believe a blessing might be obtained in this way, especially if published in the way of which you speak; for these blessed truths might then be conveyed under eyes that would not be turned upon a more *professedly* serious publication. Have you done anything yet in the way of putting them forward? and have you determined upon your plan? Pray tell me. I think I did not reply in my first letter on these subjects to your kind desire of dedicating them. I remember when I had sealed my letter this neglect flashed across my mind. Be assured, my beloved friend, I shall welcome any such tokens of your affection and gladly own this appeal to my heart. I have now no need to tell you that you may call upon this heart in any way whereby it can contribute to your comfort, without any limitation; for so far as it is capable of answering, I know it will.

My dear child is mercifully restored, though not so strong as before the fever, but indeed she is never strong in the mortal tabernacle. There is a general delicacy of habit which keeps her under varying appearances in this respect; but in the inward man, blessed and abiding vigour prevails. I therefore can ask no more, knowing as I do, that the Lord is ever the best decider in respect of our present measure of ease¹; she is probably hereby kept in a more heavenly frame, and I am also reminded that flowers which bloom in such a world as this are transitory in their stay. Much as she is entwined about my heart, and peculiarly dear to me as she must be, I know that if she should be called away, it will be in a

voice of love, that will do nothing without imparting the accompanying strength of the covenant whereby His ways shall be received as wholly right. My own frame was a little infected by the fever which was more violent upon her; when she recovered, I sickened in a slight degree, but it passed away, only confining me two or three days, although leaving great debility, from which I have been gradually recovering.

I wish to answer all your interesting questions, some of them would occupy too much of *paper*, but should it be our Lord's will to bring us together in personal interview, as my soul hopes and expects, we then may possess fuller power to tell of the marvellous works of God. There is a passage in the Psalms which I love, “The works of the Lord are great, *sought out* of them that love Him.” I delight in this *seeking out*, and after every new engagement of such kind am constrained to say “they ought to be had in remembrance.” As to my sweet child, the Lord seems to have taken the ordering of her peculiarly into His own hands, and to have consecrated her from her birth by more than a mother's love; surely she lived and derived her nourishment from the midst of a heart where sighs and prayers and longings after Jesus lived; and to Him be the glory of that amazing grace which has made her like a lovely opening plant developing supernatural operation as she grew under the heavenly blessing.

Divine influences have been imparted to me independent of any means but affliction and the word. It never so happened that I was placed under a gospel ministry until after I was engaged in the work myself; but under every measure of those influences, the accompanying love of souls and desire for being used has prevailed, when there was as yet no probability of my passing beyond the scenes of solitude.

Solitude is most dear to me, and still the dearest of my natural delights; but you shall have more of these things, beloved fellow-spirit, when we meet. I will reply to some other questions: My dear girl does resemble me, not exactly in features, perhaps hardly at all if examined; but there is so striking resemblance in the general appearance that at a little distance we are mistaken for each other, and often spoken to by mistake by those who follow us; she is not quite so tall as I am, and I am not very tall; but you will see by this that we are alike. Our tastes &c. are but one, our dispositions also, excepting that I have by nature more lively spirits, at least, so my own family tell me. Perhaps, however, they mistake, since I am more particularly called to *support* them under various trials; and sometimes with a very different inward frame I seem to be what is deemed lively. Stonefall is a little cottage, nearly two miles from Knaresborough, it was built some years since and made comfortable for my dear sister, whose health required country air; she could not live in the vicarage, and our duties would not admit of removing further. Many different appointments have belonged to us since that period; by one of which we were all resident in a house close to the town for three years, during which time Stonefall was let to a tenant. Three years since, we returned to it again. More of all this you will understand, my beloved friend, when I may tell you of some troubles which have pursued us. It will at present suffice, that I give you some idea of our abode, habits, &c. This little cottage has been adorned in its exterior by my sister's taste, who has her recreation very much in this way. It used to be covered and surrounded with roses, but the last tenant let all go to ruin, and it is but recovering the beauty it formerly possessed. Your imagination was therefore very just in its

association. *I love roses*, and have a kind of fondness for flowers and birds and all country delights, of which your own heart will conceive, for I fancy we are alike—in short, we consider Stonefall as a sweet retreat; my sister now remains there. The vicarage in the town is now occupied by —, and Mr. C— has rooms in it for his own convenience. I have a building also, called my school, a large room where I have my meetings; it stands on a rock overlooking the river, the long walk, and looking to the ruins of the castle: under the room I have two apartments, one is my little retirement looking over the river; also, I have no sounds but doves, rooks, &c., all suited to my taste. A little cottage joins the building, in which two old people live, faithful servants, who take care of me and Maria, and the school, when we are down. Maria has a day-school at Stonefall consisting of nearly forty girls, her little school there stands in our garden. Thus you perceive, my friend, that when at Knaresborough it is working-time, and, as it respects me, at Stonefall it is principally writing avocations, excepting that two days in the week I leave three hours each open for occasional callers; of these in summer I have many from Harrogate who come on christian interests. Our singing is considered particularly interesting in the church, Maria and I are engaged in it and have the management of the girls; she has a beautiful voice and knowledge of the science, and we have some sweet disciples who give themselves to it.

When ‘Sympathy’ comes, which I expect in a day or two, I will send with it and your dear papers, one of our hymn-books which we use in our private meetings. It is a selection by myself. I will put a mark against my favourite hymns. But usually in private meetings we sing what is appropriate to the subject for the time.

The characters described by my sister are real,—I was Rachel's friend. Every word of the narrative is interesting to me,—it is stated just *as it occurred*. My sister is older than I, and I am her darling, and have been so from childhood,—we are alike as to family likeness—very much so in mind and taste, perhaps not in disposition, she is more reserved.

Now I think I have, though very shortly, answered every question of this description, excepting what belongs to my own health and my sister's departure. Of the former I must say it is not strong, but I am seldom laid up from work; generally during the summer I am pretty well enabled for what is before me, notwithstanding a sense of bodily weakness. In winter I am conscious of greater debility; the air is too cold for me, but it is *best* for me! The departure of my dear sister would indeed be a great trial to natural feelings; but, my beloved friend, you and I know that sorrows are part of our lot,—Jesus will dry our tears! I do not allow myself to anticipate to-morrow's evils; sufficient for the day is its own preparation—"Let the Lord do what seemeth Him good."

I have just closed my late set of subjects on the discipline of the heart, and begin another next Monday. On Friday I am going through Peter. My yesterday's subject was 1 Pet. i. 5; my next will be the sixth verse. This little sketch will help you, my precious friend, in thinking of me, and in meeting me before the Lord. I feel how much your remembrances have had this effect with me, therefore I draw this conclusion.

Being tenderly anxious that you should have a letter in this month, I will close up this sheet, and send it to-night. Let us realize our bonds increasingly, and steep them in Jesus' precious blood; and after all we have passed through, let our hope enter within the veil as an

anchor sure and stedfast. Thus we shall ride out every storm ; and although our bark may be rudely tossed, it shall feel that it is in safety kept in Him who is our Rock.

Farewell, my loved sister ; remember me with true love to all yours, and accept that of all mine. I am your sympathizing sister and real friend,

M. S.

LXXII.

Mystery of the Life of Godliness—Questions answered.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I GRIEVE to think that your heart has been disappointed in its expectation from me, but you will understand that no such feeling would be willingly occasioned from one who so truly loves you, and therefore will expect me to assign a reason why my letter, my book, and your manuscripts have been so tardy in their movements towards you. I was then called very unexpectedly to make a rapid journey on some business, which kept me away longer than I had anticipated, and in consequence gave me an accumulation of business on my return, before I could put matters into their usual regularity, and I have taken the earliest hour I could properly devote to this sweet occupation.

I found your last little packet when I came from my meeting, but have not yet had any power to read its contents, so that if I do not send all the papers at this time you will understand the reason ; but if this evening remains without further claims, I may devote it to the perusal of the contents.

Thank you, my beloved friend, for all that now lies upon my table before me, in which I see and realize most affectionately the confidence of love which the Lord has been pleased to create between us. I trust His own Spirit, to whom we owe our every sensation of holy union, will abound in the rich demonstration of our mutual part in Him, and that we shall live in the perpetual experience of this anticipation of heavenly blessedness ; knowing, as we gratefully do, that all the hidden life of faith is the precious offspring and care of the covenant God. We may well rejoice in its continuance as sure ; and we may be glad also in the persuasion that by the Omniscient Presence of its Author it will be called forth from us perpetually into the particular acts by which its life is manifested. Amongst these acts we will believe that we may number the outgoings of affection we feel for each other, and then we shall experience new delight whenever this privilege is proved.

What a blessed mystery is the life of godliness, when it pleases our Jesus to come and make His dwelling in our hearts ! the wonderful combination of every different description of feeling which it is possible for a creature to know, all brought into one direction, and all expressed in increased longings only to glorify God, and live to the Lord,—is a possession which even the possessor cannot fully understand. And I many times look upon the history of this existence, as it is known in my own breast, with awe and love combined. Truly our God is wonderful in His holy places ; and, wherever He works in the consecrated chambers of a believing heart, displays unutterable power, and grace past finding out. I find it very sweet to follow out these reflections into the subjects to which they lead ; and as I occupy those proportions of time that are set apart for devo-

tional delights, find a rich repast in thus feeding upon the Spirit's grace. I present you, my beloved friend, before my mind's eye as likely to be very much occupied in the same flow of spirit, now that probably your situation may for a season be more retired, and encompassed by the beauties of God's creation. To myself such scenes are peculiarly serviceable and welcome, and I conclude that our congeniality will shew itself herein as in other things. May the heavenly visitations of the Comforter fill every retreat where your foot is directed, and whisper sweet peace through every breeze that blows; and whether you meet the north or south wind of the Spirit, O may it be to bring forth the spices of your inward garden to the praise of the covenant-keeper of the spot! It is our privilege, my precious friend, to be assured that all the operations of the Spirit must effect something of this description, and thus we learn to receive severest dispensations, equally with the milder, in a disposition of simple affiance in the Lord.

I have some questions to answer to you, my beloved friend, which I cheerfully do;—anything which enables us to be more intimate together in spirit, it is well to express and explain. I have put my Friday meeting to a later hour, seven in the evening, which during the summer is more convenient to the flock, and continue the expositions of the Epistle of Peter. On Monday evening, my present subject is the characters of the Old Testament. I have had that of Adam, of Eve, of Cain, of Abel, of Enoch, of Noah, and purpose proceeding regularly. I find it useful; it affords sufficient opportunity for doctrinal points to be stated, and *examples*, which when applied are perhaps forcible lessons. The hearers like this course. On Sunday, at present I have been led to consider the arrangement of the epistle, gospel, and collect for the day, shewing shortly their

harmony, and then taking the chief lesson inculcated by the arrangement for the subject of the meeting. With my class in the evening, consisting of about a hundred men and boys, I have had the various graces of the Spirit, and corruptions of nature, and have just entered upon a new course—the Titles of Christ. Our church services are from ten to half-past twelve or one, from three to five, from seven to half-past eight. The hours *between* these are our meeting and school-times, both before and after also, finishing all at about half-past nine in the evening. Our church-singing is of course in the different services, and from a selection of psalms and hymns made by ourselves—but not the same as the *Hymn-book* I send; this is for our private and social meetings, &c., selected by myself, as I mentioned. We sleep at Knaresborough on the nights of Friday and Saturday; this meets our early morning engagements on Saturday and Sunday. My days for callers at Stonefall are Tuesday and Wednesday, from one to three for strangers;—some change, however, will now perhaps be needful, as we are forming some *district* meetings which may render it needful to make a different distribution of time. My own friends and flock do not call on me in *this* way, but come each for one hour, by previous appointment made on Monday evening for the rest of the week; so that I know all my engagements a week before, *so far* as we can arrange for future hours; and my friends have by this method security for private interviews, which, as they are upon the soul's concerns, it is desirable should be uninterrupted.

I have finished the writing part of my comments, and now have only to attend to proof-sheets, expecting the whole to be published by the end of the year. Our hours for family worship are nine in the morning—in the evening the hour varies on account of meetings, &c.,

our family attending them, and the hour of return being uncertain, sickness also rendering it uncertain who officiates, we do it as may be expedient on these accounts. Usually a psalm is the subject of the evening: in the morning regular passages in the New Testament. But we have no form in these things; our servants being of the same mind with ourselves, we act as one family in spirit, and consult for what may seem most suitable for the occasion. My day for letters is Wednesday, excepting what presses for immediate reply. I have an immensely large correspondence, from having so many young people in different parts who have gone out into situations, or are settled in life.

And now, my dear friend, that I have answered these particulars, I must turn to the interesting subject of your own publications. I dare not venture upon saying that I can contribute, because I feel I am now occupied beyond what my body can well bear, and that I could not pledge myself to another work. I do not, especially at this time, feel in my usual degree of strength, and therefore, my own dear friend, it would not be right in me to give you expectation I might not be able to fulfil.

And now farewell, my ever-remembered friend! Let us constantly meet at the mercy-seat, where indeed we live. I am yours in truest love, kindled and kept by Jesus himself,

M. S.

LXXIII.

From a distance—Necessary Attention—Indisposition—Thoughts of Home—Christian Subjection—Hidden Life—Conquered Heart—Scenes travelled through—Lincoln Cathedral—Peterborough—Cambridge—Personal Meditations—Southend—Yearning after the Flock—The place where she desired to bid farewell.

AT length, my dearest ——, I have a quiet opportunity in which to greet you from a distant land. The first part of our journey was wholly occupied, and left me no time to do more than give my portion of agreed daily communications of our safety, &c.; for you may perhaps understand how little leisure was mine when you consider my dear M——'s dependent state for nursing and care, packing and unpacking, stage after stage, and attention to see the various objects demanding notice at each station, along with a degree of early rising to which I have been unaccustomed, and which rendered me completely tired when we reached the place of sleep. The last few days have been still more engrossed by my own indisposition, which has been severe and distressing, although I endeavoured to keep it as much as possible to myself, wishing earnestly to prosecute our journey until arrived at a place where we could conveniently lay up. Six or eight hours of violent sickness at Walden brought my disordered system into an effort for relief—and I think it has been one of my violent attacks of bile. I bless the Lord that the last day has been one of considerable amendment, and probably I shall now derive some benefit from air and rest.

You will know, my beloved friend, how many thoughts of home rushed across my mind and heart; but thoughts such as these are subject to a more gra-

cious discipline, and yield to the love of that present path of duty which is opened out before my pilgrimage-steps. Very often I look back upon the past with reflections full of conviction, that much of natural and unsubdued feeling may prompt some of the affections of which perhaps we might be wickedly proud, and that christian subjection is much more conspicuous in the meek acceptance of what is best before our Lord. O that the ripening knowledge of what constitutes the hidden life may advance more and more in fruits to Jesus' praise, and mould me at last into that entire will which is wisdom and truth.

Our way has been very interesting and very affecting. I must reserve many particulars until we meet, when, if it please God that we have some renewed hours of converse, I shall have much to talk about, which will be interesting to both our hearts.

I suppose you will have heard of some of our steps, and will know that we passed through P—, scenes associated with many retrospects calling out powerful feelings, and I trust risings of soul to the great and glorious source of that salvation which has been so conspicuous in me—a salvation, my dearest —, extending to all things, and presenting an unsearchable mystery to my enraptured and conquered heart—conquered at last, I trust it is, and made to know that there is nothing worth knowing save “Jesus Christ and him crucified!”

The country through which we have travelled has been very delightful; the greatest variety has met our eye, and although in some places not always equally luxuriant, yet the very contrast has been agreeable. We have also been gratified by many sights which must be desirable as exhibitions of taste—and I think I shall never forget the really sublime scene of Lincoln Cathe-

dral; we visited its solemn aisles, too, at a time which gave additional seriousness to the sensations which necessarily filled our breasts. The shades of the evening threw the distant objects into a degree of obscurity, and the rising moon, ere we left the building, threw some sweet rays across, highly interesting to my mind. My affections too rose with a mournful tribute as we sang a few lines of devotional praise to our God. Perhaps I was equally gratified in Peterborough, though in a different way. There the Minster stands embosomed in wood; and our chief delight arose from the song of the nightingales, thronging the grove which surrounds the building.

At Cambridge I was confined by sickness; but as we came out of the town we turned into King's College Chapel, and heard a beautiful anthem. From that period to this I have been thrown inward with personal meditations, and being very ill each mile of the way, had the indulgence of silence afforded to me.

We arrived here (Southend) late last night, in the midst of heavy rain, but well protected by the cover of the gig. We slept at the hotel, and fixed this morning upon the lodging from which I now write. We are comfortable and retired. The owner of the house a widow, who we think will prove a lover of Jesus, and the servant who waits upon us a pleasant girl. We have a full view of the busy scene upon the waters, and a most beautiful inland country full of wood and shrubs, even down to the water, where there is a shrubbery and winding walks, affording a retreat, to which whilst we stay I shall delight to turn. The air is warm, and very different from the more northern coast, and appears to be very suitable to our dear invalid. She seems to recruit by slow degrees, though with sudden changes of colour and appearance, which indicate her

delicate state. I am truly thankful that the Lord put it into our power and purpose to make this effort in her behalf; and we hope that in a little time we may return invigorated for work, and better able to labour in his cause. In the midst of every circumstance, we talk of our flock, and prize our home more and more; nor can the beauties of scenery, nor all the objects which we justly admit as excellent and to be admired, divert our hearts and tenderest recollections from the beloved spot where all most dear to us in earth are assembled in one band. Glad shall we be when our faces turn to our own Zion, and happy once more to hail the distant view of our abode as we draw near the rest therein. This great distance gives a passing sensation of pain; but I endeavour to banish it, lest brooding there it might occasion some evil that ought not to arise.

I hope all is going on well,—there is an everlasting Keeper, and this is my comfort. To Him I hourly commit you all; and especially last Sunday had my sighs and prayers upon this subject, as you very well know. Do not omit giving my love to each individual you know I would name. As to writing, I see very little prospect of doing much. Our stay here will most likely be a week—it may be ten days; but in this time exercise is to be the chief concern, and *in* the house you know how it is requisite to be disengaged, and ready for converse; and I am sure our dear earthly protector deserves every attention which affection can give. He is unwearied in anxious solicitude for our comfort, and this at the sacrifice of his prevailing desire for home. Pray for us, my dear girl, and ask that we may speedily return to you, and our way be prospered. From this place we go to London, spend a few days, and then take our course for Knaresborough. So is our present plan; you may therefore write to me safely to this place,

directing to be left at the post-office, Southend, Essex, till called for. Even should we be gone, we shall leave directions to follow us; so that you need have no uncertainty about the fate of your letter.

O there is no place like Knaresborough! May it be the Lord's will that we bid farewell to earth amidst its privileges and associations! God bless you, my dearest —, and evermore enrich you with himself! Do not fail to write to me. I was disappointed that not one Knaresborough letter met us here. Forget not your friend —. I need not charge you upon this subject. I have long proved your faithfulness, and I believe ours are bonds that must and shall abide for ever.

Maria and Mr. C——send their affectionate love. Believe me always your most faithful friend,

M. S.

LXXIV.

Contemplations under Sickness, on past and future lurking Evil.

[In offering this letter I am tempted to call the observation of the reader to the date, 1820—as connected with its interesting statement of the experience of her heart just twenty years previous to her final sickness and death. How encouraging it is to see the uniform frame of faith and the persevering grace of the Lord!—the same sentiments might have been dated 1840.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ONE of the considerations by which I am made to be glad under bodily suffering is the opportunity afforded me (though by slow degrees) to write a few letters, as my strength will allow me. I have thought of you much, and wished to answer your last long letter before this period; and now that I can sometimes leave my

sofa and sit up in my chair a few hours, I endeavour to devote one to converse with you. I say *converse*, for although I have all the talk on my side at this time, yet knowledge of the heart and the experience of yours enables me to hear your reply and to know what you would say. I believe I have been nearer eternity under this attack than I have been for many years; I am *sure* I have in spirit, and probably in my near approach to dropping of the mortal part,—how this sickness will end at present seems rather uncertain. Inflammation in the liver has been its formal feature, but this has yielded to violent remedies, leaving me however in such a state of extreme debility that I feel as if I was rapidly declining; this may only be the natural consequence of what I have suffered, and if so, I may renew my course once more with restored energies; bountiful grace has been with me, and rich abundance of mercy has attended every moment! Nor can I ever sufficiently exalt that free loving-kindness of the Lord which always selects the special hour of need for special demonstration of his power. O it is sweet, my dear friend, to breathe the heavenly air, and to be taken to the heights from whence transporting visions of the everlasting scene are freely given; and truly I rejoice in the present visitation with unspeakable gratitude, for the occasion it has afforded to realize more of the covenant and to taste what the banqueting-house contains. Certainly there are abundant portions given out during the whole of our pilgrimage-way;—but for this arrangement of love, how often should we faint under the scorching heat of the desert, or fall into the deeps of tempest and distress; but our souls' beloved is always near, and in proportion to our stature and state will at all times communicate what is needful to the nourishment of the hidden life; yet moments of richer intimacy are found as we draw near

to the accomplishment of our desires ; and a peculiar foretaste of joys to come, is sometimes granted after great spiritual conflict, and deep affliction in the discovery of our hearts. Blessed be his Name for all self-emptying experiences which lead to such replenishment out of the fulness that is in Him, and for ever be his wisdom our glory and boast, whilst we are enabled so clearly to perceive the manifest expediency of enduring utmost mortifications, that in the humiliations of the spirit this glorious sufficiency may be proved ! I think the Lord is pleased, previously to our departure out of this trying wilderness, to give us opportunity not only to look forward into prepared rest, but likewise to take such a retrospect of the past as is attended with illuminated discoveries of the truth and mercy which have been displayed in every turn and winding by which we have traversed the desert ; when we can sit down and from such heights look back upon what is gone, no longer contemplating the dark clouds of mysterious providences in fearful apprehension and distrust, but beholding the bow of the covenant upon them all, and their apparent burden emptied in showers of blessings upon the soul. Thus, my dear friend, I see the past ; all the scene seems touched with the glowing beams of our everlasting sun, and glory to Jesus, the faithful Friend is conspicuous in the whole. But what does the opposite side of the landscape present ? When quitting the view of what is behind, I turn to contemplate the region that lies before. O how unspeakable are the provisions of love that appear in every part of Jesus' work ! The exclusion of all evil from that sweet world of love is assuredly a great communication to such wrestling, exposed, and suffering creatures as we are ; but in addition to this, we apprehend the realization of all *good*—of all which the full light of God's

countenance upon the soul can afford ! The excellencies of the heavenly rest ofttimes engage my thoughts, but we must confess that even Spirit-taught children have very low conceptions of what is that pure River of the Water of Life—that fruitful exhibition of the Tree of Life,—by which the glorious Paradise above is distinguished. It is however good for us to be frequent in elevation of heart, and to be seeking a more spiritual taste of the prepared kingdom ; and sure I am that in stirring up the soul unto these exercises there will always be found a great return of internal peace, and a great excitement to run with greater diligence the race that may remain. We are very defective in general upon this part of our privilege, as the followers of Christ, for we have liberty given for most endeared moments in every hour of need ; and we may possess the enlargement of such consolations, for there is no lack in our glorious Head ; why then do we not rise to the delights which gladden the multitudes round the throne ? and why is not earth more divorced from the affections and more surrendered in truth ? Let us not be contented however with appeals and lamentations ; this idle way suits well with nature, but does not cherish grace, and no sooner do we discover a lurking evil than uprightness should pluck it up by the roots. We should be spared much trouble of soul were we more prompt to act as immediate testimony of the Spirit dictates, and I earnestly pray God that this resolution of faith and love may be increasingly vigorous until we labour with our Lord and work in one purpose with him.

I can write no more ; I am entirely wearied by this effort, and I close my letter hastily. May all the compassions of Christ be around you, and bring you safely home. Believe me, your truly affectionate mother in him,

M. S.

LXXV.

Consolation under clouded Prospects and Depression.

MY DEAR ——,

I HAD an interview yesterday with your friend, the result of which was an agreement that a letter from me would be acceptable to you, under the present trying circumstances in which you are placed; and she tells me to say that she will write when your next may arrive. The contents of your last threw us both into a degree of surprise and affected our hearts with sympathetic affection; but I hope ere this your *suspense* at any rate will be relieved, and your prospects more certain to your own perception. Certain they are, as it respects the everlasting compassions of Him whose regulating grace directeth all things and arrangeth as most suitable to the pilgrim's advancement in heavenly things. As to the temporal anxieties which may belong to this threatening reverse, I trust they are now hushed into child-like repose, since you know with full conviction that bread shall be sure, and that the leading conductor of our way fails not to care for the body.

Probably you will find that —— is faithful to the encouragement which he has given for your expectation, that he will act as a friend towards you. Relative influence may indeed effect a great degree of change in purpose, but I think he will not forget your service, and the unwearied kindness you have shewn to his children; but the scripture says, “Yea, they may forget.” We have to learn *experimentally* that man is lighter than vanity and deceitful upon the weights. We reason upon such things with excellent theory, but

it is better to know it in the exercise, the perception, in midst of those scenes which belong to our personal journey through the wilderness. This has been proved to myself, my dear girl, by painful disappointments; but painful visitations are profitable, and, in fact, are oftentimes the most effectual messengers in bringing us into the simplicity and heavenliness of a *stranger here!* May this event be sanctified to this end in your soul, my dear M——, and then even if the cloud is dispersed unto the evidence of *human kindness*, you will still have been profitably instructed, and will have learnt greater recollections perhaps of the entire uncertainty of earthly things.

It appeared very unlikely that you should suffer anything of this description, at least at this period, and surely it is the Lord's hand and must work for good.

I have had a still greater anxiety for you as it respects the spiritual frame of mind which seemed to be with you, from the strains of your letter. I fear you are distressed; indeed there is in the trial that which has in it a tendency to produce such a frame. Deprived as you are of christian communion, it requires vigour of fellowship with the Lord, if we would maintain a lively persuasion of the great objects upon which we hang; and in those situations where there is also occasion to call out the natural affections unto the creature the danger of depression to the hidden life is still more extreme. But it is some comfort, when we find that such a condition depresses also the *joys* of the soul, for this decides our interest in and preference for the consolation of the Spirit, which evidences that the heart waketh even when the language is constrained to be, "I sleep." It is better that we should suffer in this behalf than that the mind should rest satisfied without a tide of love from our souls' beloved. May Jesus refresh you, my dear

girl, by sending through this trial a precious shower upon your parched soul; and may he cause the rich fragrance of truest meekness and peace to abound in and by you, shewing forth the peculiar privilege of his people, in the midst of tribulation to fear no evil! I unfeignedly recommend you to the Lord's bosom, where heaven is found; and I hope I shall hear how victoriously his right arm hath brought you through seas of trouble, and made you richer by the experience.

So all his ways shall give him honour and tend to increase our store against the time when, viewing all his wonderful leadings in the light of heaven, we shall understand and celebrate the wisdom which directed all. Farewell, my beloved M——, may we walk underneath his banner, and see in all our steps the pillar and the cloud. Believe me ever your most affectionate friend and mother in Him,

M. S.

LXXVI.

Breathings heavenward—Wasted Sensibilities—Change of Residence—Means of conscious Establishment.

MY DEAR M——,

ALTHOUGH this letter will probably not be sent to you until it is accompanied by the next volume of my book, I do not let the little opportunity for writing which now presents myself pass away unappropriated. But in this season of comparative retirement my heart is with my beloved fellow-pilgrims, and especially this morning has been engaged in thinking upon you.

How precious is the power which the Holy Spirit

imparts to the children of the heavenly kingdom, enabling them to realize the bonds which make them eternally one, and thus to anticipate the blissful reunion above, when they who have followed Jesus below shall meet again in personal fellowship, and bless their Saviour and King! Such expectations may well cheer and delight the soul, and render the cares of this world light and easy.

O my dear M——, I earnestly desire that you may know the supernatural existence of the believer still more and more, rising to the mount of great salvation, and dwelling in the presence of our beloved Lord. As we approach nearer to the fruition of our desires in the eternal kingdom, these breathings become more intense; and I trust it is an evidence that the power of attraction heavenwards increases as we draw closer to the blissful region. Events that occur every day around us seem to shew how little else ought to be attractive, and how vain and unsatisfactory every object is that has not the prospect of the heavenly world in view. And the more we advance to the proper life of faith, so much the more will human things come to their proper standard in our judgment.

Is it not surprising that we should ever put so great a value upon the dying concerns of a life that at best is filled with anxieties? And are we not amazed when we look back and contemplate the objects upon which we have lavished so much time, and possibly spent so many tears? To my soul it is very affecting; and I feel humbled before the Lord when I consider how sensibilities that have their only suitable end in God himself have been wasted upon dying possessions of the wilderness, when they might have been feeding upon the pure enjoyment of the spiritual Canaan! But such retrospective views seem to quicken us for the time to come;

and great is the mercy of the Lord, who in His covenant power takes occasion even by our infirmities to produce our greater holiness. To Him be all the praise, and may He everlastingly receive the grateful tributes of our hearts!

You will have heard that we have left the Vicarage. This would surprise you at first, and truly to me it appeared an event that would never take place but through the visitation of death. I am satisfied, however, that it was rendered necessary by the state of my sister's health, and the increasing inconvenience of having her so far from us as Stonefall. We are now therefore all together, and in this sweet situation possess the advantages of retirement and the vicinity of the town in one. Since the building of my school, and the little room which I have for myself at that place, retirement has been so much more secured to me during my morning hours, which are generally given to writing, that I rejoice to think this comfort is shared by others; for certainly we are rendered more vigorous for active duties by having a sufficient preparation of time for the private intercourse of the soul with God. Of this, my beloved M——, you will be experimentally sensible; for we feel that there is no consciousness of *establishment* unless we are engaged in constant communion with Christ, and that the most regular discharge of relative duties will not suffice to give the unutterable peace of a sense of God's love shed abroad in the heart, unless accompanied with the habitual rising of the soul to the bosom of Jesus Christ. At this moment probably you will be proving the truth of what I say; for if my idea is right, this period of the year gives to your care another interesting charge; and of course your duties and your engagements increase with every such increase of responsibility. O may you derive from the Covenant

new impartations of strength, and be strong *in the Lord* for the various exercises which may attend your appointed path,—then all is precious! And whilst we lean upon the arm of our Beloved, we are able to tread upon the most difficult places, and to climb the steepest ascent.

My heart's supplications are with you, my dear girl. O be steadfast, abounding in the work of the Lord. Soon shall we behold that glory of the Great Messiah, and soon rejoice with His ransomed in victory over every evil!

The kingdom of our Lord prospers marvellously with us, and His grace abounds to us all! Most interesting openings are presented on every side for the spread of the gospel. Mr. C—— is much called upon in extensive labour. Pray for us that the overshadowing of the divine presence may be our sufficiency and joy.

Let me hear from you soon; and let us meet at Jesus' feet. Ever believe me your truly affectionate mother and friend in the bonds of eternal love,

M. S.

LXXVII.

*Regulated Wishes—Purposes of Illness—Signs of the Times—Death-bed—
Different Measure.*

MY DEAREST M——,

AN opportunity presents itself for sending my book, and I send with it just a few lines of greeting, knowing that your eyes will look into the packet with the expectation that some little note will be within. I would not disappoint such affection; and with true and tender love

I desire, my dear girl, that all your hopes and all your expectations, which *may* be gratified consistently with your eternal peace, may meet the ready blessing which they seek !

I trust that the Eternal Spirit has so regulated these wishes that they cease from man, and that they may therefore find their fruition. Sure I am that nothing out of Jesus can satisfy a regenerate soul; and that every day's experience does but the more powerfully convince us of the blessedness that He can give, and of the vanity of all out of Him.

I think, my dear M——, we have had our share of experience in this respect, and that from our very heart we can agree in this sentiment. Let us also agree in exercising such faith as may more and more realize the extent of our heritage in Christ. We have affecting evidences of the rapidly advancing hour when we shall ascertain our lot in a better world. But even here below we may attain to the privilege of resting in our Saviour's heart of love, and of finding that to *live* is Christ.

I heard of your dangerous illness after it was in some measure past. I hope, my dear M——, that it proved a time of peace, and that you will have had some sweet views of your interest in the eternal kingdom, which will prove cordials for the remaining pilgrimage. In my own illnesses I find the Lord thus faithful; and I think such seasons are given on purpose to afford an occasion when we may retire awhile from the busy hours of life, and have more enlarged opportunity for communion and self-examination;—though blessed be God our *every* day is of the same description, and in the discharge of relative duty we are still kept in fellowship with our Lord,—“ in Him we live and move, and have our being.”

I shall be glad to have a letter from you : it is refreshing to remind one another of the bonds by which we are united for eternity ; and it serves to stir up our gratitude to God for the wonderful way in which he carries his children in their different circumstances through life. And now possibly you will have to tell of increased discoveries of your own helplessness and of the fulness of Jesus. These are times in which we are able to advance till we behold the Great Deliverer face to face, and lose the sense of human misery in the light of His everlasting kingdom.

You would be very much interested were you to witness the spirit of enquiry into the great salvation that abounds around us. Perhaps we are in a situation particularly to call out this demonstration ;—our nearness to Harrowgate gives us the opportunity of seeing and hearing how the Lord in different parts of the earth is pouring out that Spirit which marks the latter days ; and many running to and fro, and knowledge increasing. Every day during the last months something of this kind has occurred amongst us, and it is remarkable how much it is amongst *young people* and in the higher classes ; so that I am led to think that God is preparing against the time of his manifestation, and that He is about to use the influence and consecrate the substance of the rich to the great end of his dominion. All things are his ; and when he chooses to have need of the perishing mammon of this world to effect his will, he has only to demand and secure it for his own.

You will have heard probably of the death of —, in the midst of conflict most heart-rending to witness. She lamented not having lived in greater fervor and simplicity, urging upon those who were with her to live closer to God. Such scenes are very affecting ; in truth, my dear M——, I never visited where I felt more of

distress in this kind of sympathy ; and I hope it will be a lesson to us all that we shall not forget. May the summons find us on our watch-tower, and the privilege of entering the kingdom, *abundantly*, be extended ! We know the fulness and the faithfulness of the covenant in Christ, and are sure that a sinner shall not be cast out when laying hold of the Cross. Yet it is evident that *measures* differ, and that we are called to labour for the full extent of the divine life in the soul.

Farewell, my beloved girl ; may we meet in our Lord's presence ere long, when our work is done, and sing the praises of Him who will bring us safely through all. Your most affectionate mother and friend in Jesus,

M. S.

LXXVIII.

To a foolish Heart prone to Creatures.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

INDEED I am not a very prompt correspondent, nor need I tell you why, for you are well acquainted with the many reasons I have to feel writing letters sometimes a great fatigue ; this does not hinder my wishes, however, for I have a few individuals in my round of absent friends to whom I would willingly send my frequent representatives, and whose affectionate desire to hold communion with me I do most truly acknowledge.

I was very much rejoiced to receive your last on many accounts. I had felt some anxiety respecting the association into which you might be thrown, and feared that not only barrenness in means of grace, but habits of dissipation brought before your eyes might prove very

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distressing and dangerous to your soul. It is a great mercy that to this latter evil you seem not likely to be exposed. Not that I apprehended any power of allure-
ment in those things by which you might have been carried into "the same excess of riot," but we know that there is frequently a very dangerous influence, and sometimes a chilling wind from this cold world, which is prejudicial to the plants of grace in our heart. I am glad too that the scene is so retired. To every child of God it must be favourable when opportunity is afforded for meditation and prayer; but, perhaps, to none is it more serviceable than to the labourer, more especially previous to the direct ministerial work to which the Lord has appointed you.

How often do we find the scripture workers carried into solitude for a season, and thus prepared in the ex-
ercise of private communion for the more public dis-
charge of important duties; and O how much of grate-
ful praise should we feel when in any measure we seem
to be conformed to such as are made meet for active
service, in the intimate knowledge of our God, and a
deep acquaintance with ourselves! These are the two
great branches of true wisdom in which it is essential
that we should advance, and advance in either cannot
well be obtained but in the opportunities alternately
afforded for intercourse and seclusion; for observation
upon the Lord's dealings with others, and meditations
upon them in ourselves. I hope this is a sanctified
appointment of your eternal Friend for you, and that
with the same faithful care with which He has always
watched over you, He is still conducting your way, and
will guide all your steps.

But why do you suffer your foolish heart to be so
prone to go after the creature? I think you do an
injury to your own peace by not resisting the propen-

sity thus hastily to attach yourself. In the first place it is *hastily*, upon the ground of your present situation, which precludes the *prudent* engagement of yourself until your prospects are more matured ; it is hastily too, because unless you have frequent intercourse with the person, it is impossible that the disposition, mental attainments, and some other requisites for which you ought to look in a companion for life can be ascertained. And undoubtedly the admission of an object into the heart, for whom you must necessarily wait a considerable time, and with whom you have little opportunity to commune, must prove an entanglement and in a great measure a hindrance to other pursuits. I do not say this only in allusion to the person mentioned by you, for when the heart is attached it is a difficult and delicate matter to interfere ; but *in the general*, I mean to say, I do sincerely wish your mind and heart to be armed against the intrusion of creatures until there is a surer prospect of such a termination, as may increase not merely your present comfort, but your ministerial usefulness. Why must you have some favourite earthen vessel upon whom you may stay your thoughts ? I am sure this is not good for you in your present circumstances, and that it would be more for your final happiness to resist for a while whatever might so interfere with your essential preparations.

Do not smile and say I write with too much indifference on the subject. Were you *seriously* interested and engaged to any one, I would counsel the regulation and vigilant observation of the inmate in your breast. But when you *have* to fix, and are only as it were *solicited*, and that perhaps not always uniformly by one object, then I think there is much resolution necessary, and that the attempts which are thus made upon the heart should be beat off with determined purpose. It is time enough

when you really see the opening and leadings of the Lord ; for even thus we admit some peril into the breast ; and I am sure before that time it is for our best interest to be as indifferent as we can to every creature, excepting as we can love them in Christ. Now I believe you will heartily acquiesce in these sentiments, and I hope that ere this my counsel arrives, your thoughts will be settled once more independently of all things, save the great and glorious subject which demands so much your soul.

Probably when you are more regularly engaged in appointed studies you will feel your mind less disturbed upon the lesser concerns of this life. I think there is not a more successful method, by which to triumph over inordinate natural feelings, than continual application to some pursuit in which we must engage the mind. Indolence, and what is called relaxation, usually lead us into temptations of this nature, and a mentally diligent life is, I believe, the happiest and the safest ! How sweetly do our hours pass when we are occupied in what we know must yield a harvest of most enduring delights, in a service which is perfect freedom, and such pleasantness and peace, that had we no enjoyments laid up in reserve, surely the pathway which is marked out by our Saviour is the richest that is known along this desert world. May we know it more and more, and always be able to say that " He leads us by the still waters of comfort." * * * * * An enlarged acquaintance with christians has a very beneficial effect upon the heart, provided we guard against attendant dangers, for we are apt to be shut up too much within the narrow sphere of our own particular vineyard, or of our own more personal conflicts, whilst the church at large is very frequently less in our thoughts and prayers than it should be. O how much do we need perpetual leadings

of the Spirit in order to keep us in the narrow way, and to prevent those deviations which to the right hand or to the left we are so prone to make. I hope you will be diligent and punctual in prayer and fellowship with this blessed Leader. But I need scarcely say this, since the necessity and appetite of your soul will remind you continually that there is a dear throne of grace and a waiting willing Lord. Some occasions too may offer for casting bread upon the waters. O never lose them, it is a bitter reflection when we have lost an opportunity ; and in your present circumstances frequent openings must be made in which the testimony of a disciple may be given ; if not at this time, the seed may spring up hereafter ; and at any rate there is no effort made for Christ which is left without a glorious answer in our own heart. Remember then where and what you are, and let it be known that there has been a *believer* at ——. The Lord bless and strengthen you in every rich experience of his love !

Yours affectionately,
M. S.

LXXIX.

Condolence—Counsel—Deprivations—Times of Trial—Tributes of Blessing—Work of Redemption—Gospel Medicine.

MY DEAR M——,

IT has given me unfeigned concern to hear that you are suffering under the pressure of so much bodily sickness, and I would send you a few lines of sympathy by the present opportunity, earnestly hoping that they will find you either better in health or in (what is much more important) spiritual confidence and peace.

I cannot say that I am very much surprised that this should be your present state of health. When I last saw you I was persuaded that some great alteration in this respect had taken place, and my passing idea was that you would not long be an inhabitant of this world. Yet how often do the most delicate linger on this side Jordan when, did we judge from external appearances, we should look for the rapid passage of the waiting soul—and how many vigorous forms drop at their side and yield to the mortal stroke! However, my dear girl, whether we are appointed to many days or few, it is our part to realize the everlasting scene, and in the true character of christian faith to wait, and long, and look, hastening to the moment which shall give us to the arms of our beloved, and esteeming it far better to depart and be with Christ. Is it thus with you? I would fain hope that your ready answer is, Yes, verily;—but it does not follow of course; there are hidden exercises known only to the Lord and to our own hearts, wherein great conflict is endured, and although we might be ready to hail the approach of our fruition of bliss, yet some damping clouds will come and occasionally intercept the brightness of our faith. Infinite wisdom directs and governs all these things: some final enrichment will be the consequence of every gracious struggle; and whether it is intended hereby to draw forth grace into action or to refine from remaining dross, it cannot but prove in the end to the glory of our Lord and to our increase of blessedness. By these recollections, my dearest M——, we cheer the gloomy scene, and many a time are enabled to drink of refreshing waters in the wilderness!

I fear you will now very much feel the loss of external means. In the hour of sickness it is sweet to hold communion with the saints, and the dearest alleviations are

often found in their society ; but I trust you will have Him with you by whom only the channels can be sanctified to any real good, and if so your cup will overflow notwithstanding creature-deprivations.

Just as I write this sentiment your disposition and character come with power before me, and with this mental vision, a thought that perhaps it is most merciful you are without these supplies. Your most dangerous snare was always too much fondness for the stream ; and probably, if you possessed a rich abundance of this dispensation, your *simplicity* would not be so pure. How much better does our Lord arrange for us than we can for ourselves ! And what depths of unsearchable grace shall we ere long be for ever trying to explore, when we see him face to face, and see how faithful he is ! O, my dear M——, even here below we can understand in some measure that our Jesus is a wonder-working God, and what is past of his manifested love may well assure and comfort us for days to come. I hope we shall meet in his presence and there adore him for ever, for every mysterious appointment, and for all that hath tended to wean us from earth, to break our stony hearts, and to make us meet for final rest !

My own steps have been of late through deep waters, wherein the pillar and the cloud have been seen, and a way has been opened through the mighty deep. Oh ! no tongue can tell what God has been to me in depths of affliction and in straits of imminent peril ! I look back on all the past with a holy surprise best expressed in silence, yet sometimes breaking over restraints and constraining to the testimony of love. Surely we may say with the Psalmist, " Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life !" And if with our short-sightedness we can see cause for so much praise ; what shall it be when the light of heaven discloses our

way, and things are contemplated in the revelation that is above! My beloved girl, let your mind flow in this channel; "it becometh well the just to be thankful," and tributes of blessing are worthy our calling and name. Let us rebuke the enemy when he would depress our grateful confessions that Jesus has wrought for us wonders past finding out; and although our infirmity is great, and our transgressions are many, let us not look with a dim eye upon Him who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, and in whom we have everlasting righteousness and strength.

The work of redemption is in truth worthy of our God, it covereth all our misery, it answereth all demand! Why should we fear, who have fled for refuge to the rock of salvation? And what have we to dread, unto whom the Spirit hath revealed the deep things of God?—revealed, not in mere speculations of mental assent, but in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost, who in his teachings gives an experience that is unutterable, and a spirit that rests not without *conforming* power!

Here, my dear girl, we will repose; much *has* been done, much more *shall* be done; we have omnipotence on our side, which will carry us in safety through what remains of trial, and eventually will be our never-failing joy.

May Jesus apply all the medicines of the gospel to your poor soul, and, as the mortal tabernacle sinks, sustain you internally with comforts that are his own! And may we soon pass the last struggle into the arms of our Lord, and join the blessed that are on high.

Your tenderly affectionate and faithful mother in Jesus,

M. S.

LXXX.

Chain of Compassions—Meeting—Promise of the Father—Choosing a Companion for Life—Remarks on her own Trials.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM greatly refreshed by the many communications which I receive of you and your concerns, rejoicing to perceive how much the right hand of the Lord, which bringeth mighty things to pass, is with you. Surely goodness and mercy have followed you all your life!

The visitations of the Lord are doubly precious when we realize them as exhibited in one unbroken chain of compassions ; and whilst we look back with gratitude and wonder at past manifestations, we feel increasingly excited to hope and expect all that an unchangeable God will bestow ! Is it not thus ? And shall we not everlastinglly celebrate his praise, who so richly demands the confidence of our hearts ? Yes, verily, in your breast an Ebenezer must be reared ; and I know that we have each reason in very truth to testify of Him in whom, I trust, our all is centred.

I had an account of your interesting meeting at ——, in which my spirit joins with yours in gladness. The desolate places around you are interested in the engagement, which has promised that the rose and the myrtle shall there appear ; and I know of no visible token of its near accomplishment more powerful than the direction of the minds of believers to the important subject which formed the principal object of the meeting to which I allude.

I have been much led in my own soul to consider the Holy Ghost in his glory and relative offices with an es-

pecial affection; and I think you and I conversed upon the subject. The covenant of life is full of the testimony of his great undertaking; and I think the more we understand of that covenant as existing in the Eternal Godhead, and see the condition of the vast mass of ruin, upon which the life-giving energy must move, in order to accomplish the divine will, so much the more shall we experimentally and mentally perceive the *need* of this glorious arrangement, and the dependance of the church in all its conditions upon the promise of the Father. May He himself rest upon you in plenitude of power, enabling you, first, individually to know his excellency, and then to witness of Him to others in the unction of his presence!

I shall be glad to hear from you how you proceed in the blessed undertaking, and my prayers are with you for every prosperity to go along with your efforts. Is it not very encouraging to you to find how the darkness around your dwelling, of which you spoke when here, is gradually dispersing? and are you not thankful with a beating heart for that honour which the Lord has been pleased to put upon you, in sending you forth as a messenger of the glad tidings, and in appointing your station where preparation from himself seems visible? O may you carry within your breast a living lively heart, ready to re-echo to the voice of love and mercy, and with obedient surrender of your will and choice to Him, to follow only where He leads! The unspeakable peace which is consequent upon any degree of advancement in this simplicity, is only to be known in *testing* faith; and happy is it for us if we teachably yield to the unction of the Spirit upon the soul, or learn with aptness from the providential dispensations which speak upon this great requirement.

Alas! we are too slow to learn our own bliss; but the

Lord is persisting and patient, and we are constrained at length to know the lesson which enricheth us and glorifieth Him.

You will have expected perhaps that I should have answered your last before this period, and truly I have felt very desirous so to do ; but events, of which probably you have heard, have engaged me with great increase of business ; and I have had no inclination to write upon such a subject, as that which called for my opinion, *hastily*. It is so serious a matter to select a companion for life, that a deliberation of judgment must be requisite even as to what may form the mere mental associate ; but when affections of the heart are likewise concerned, there seems to be no power in a *second* person to judge for another. As to the dear person in question, there is much that I love in her, and so far as human judgment can extend, there is an apparently growing devotion to the great salvation of the cross ; her affections appear to gain strength in her pursuit of the prize, and I have much comfort in her. I think too she has mental energies, and she seems to have zeal, especially in desires relative to schools. In every personal respect, therefore, I greatly estimate her.

But it is another question, my dear friend, when so sacred a union is in the thought—and here nothing can determine the prospect of happiness but your own affections. As to pecuniary considerations, I think you seem to be likely to retain your present situation ; and if the person to whom you are united has a *little* upon which you might prudently depend in any unforeseen change, in this respect you seem to be fully authorized to make your proposals. Where affection and heavenly-mindedness exist, *little* gives plenty ; though I am quite of opinion that nothing can justify an imprudent risk of rushing into the cumbering misery of diffi-

culties of this description ; it is altogether injurious and very much tends to hurt ministerial influence especially ; so that there ought to be a prospect of so much as would preserve from the canker of cares, and enable to maintain a respectable situation as the servant of God.

If your heart is in such a state as to *wait* quietly, I think it would be better could you first save a little fund, lest incidental expences should cause you to begin your establishment with fetters ; but of this you are the best judge—only be *well* assured, ere you suffer your thoughts and affections to turn upon any particular object, that there is the prospect of suitableness and congeniality. I know nothing of prospects as to this world's possessions, and am as little acquainted with the state of her affections ; this latter consideration can only be ascertained by the proposal. May the Lord direct you, and cause his own light of love to go before you every step of your way !

I conclude you know we have had a taste of troubles ; but all has been regulated by the same unerring wisdom which governs all, and I have had reason to know much more of covenant manifestations in and since the event. This renders it a wholesome and welcome appointment, although mingled with heart-exercise. One of the chief trials has been the apparent degree of publicity which this circumstance has given to labours which I am sure I desire to keep in their modest retreat ; but the Lord does every thing in an orderly and arranged purpose : and in this we must be persuaded there is somewhat which is finally to issue in greater honour to Him. Our part is in every situation to cherish meek obedience ; and whatever opens a way for charity and faith belongs to an evident calling of grace, and is our privilege. Our work goes on with great increase of external excitement, and we hope, with

internal power ; in many cases it is manifest that the Holy Ghost is testifying of Jesus, and that this great name is the downfall of hell and death.

Let us pray for each other. Your affectionate,

M. S.

LXXXI.

Practical Knowledge—False Doctrine—Temptation.

I SINCERELY thank you, my beloved friend, for your welcome letter, rendered doubly welcome to my heart from the blessed assurance it affords me of your steadfastness in the pure faith of the Cross, in which I trust we shall be maintained, whatever may arise to assail it. Our strong consolation has an inexhaustible source, for it flows from the promise which is pledged to every teachable disciple, and which embraces all our interests for time or eternity. This is the period in which we behold the fulfilment of what the Lord has forewarned us to expect in the latter times, and happy it is for us that we are prepared by His faithful influence to stand firm in *scripture* doctrine. It is grievous to behold the subtlety of Satan and the success of his devices; but let us never lose sight of the joyful certainty that Emmanuel reigns, and will triumphantly maintain his own cause. These convulsions which shake the earth, and, alas, dishonour the professing church, do not affect the throne of our Lord ; his dominion shall prevail from sea to sea, and every individual of his flock shall be preserved to the final day. Our knowledge of these doctrinal truths is now to become *practical*, and our

own souls must now diligently derive from them their sustaining and joyful influence.

I believe that one of the designs of the enemy is to distress the *real* saints by the delusive heresies and divisions which deceive the unwary, and it therefore becomes part of our duty, as lovers and believers in Jesus, to manifest that this intention is seen, and the attempt impotent. Why should *we* be disquieted? why are *we* to be depressed? these are no *strange* things; and if properly used, will serve only to confirm us more in simplicity and affiance. It is my earnest desire that we may openly demonstrate our privilege, and that all men may see us unmoved, serene and patient, because we know whom we have believed, and are settled and established in the faith.

It rejoices me that you find the observations sent you by my dear sister satisfactory and useful; I believe the Lord especially rested upon her mind the night she addressed you, for her soul has been particularly excited by this awful question respecting the human nature of our beloved Lord. I think she will throw the idea into the form of a tract, which will perhaps be of service. We feel your powerful appeal, my dear friend, and are ready to embrace the call to put in our testimony against the error; and if it pleases the Lord to enable me, I purpose making an attempt to shew the nature of Jesus' sympathy, and how his very *holiness* is *necessary* for this end.

But let me now pass to your question respecting the several passages on temptation to which you refer. First, it is needful to have correct notions of the significations of the word temptation, which means *trial*, *experiment*, *proving*. It may be presented either from God, or from Satan and our spiritual enemies, and may arise from various instruments or means; but it is

always intended to make *proof of us*, or to discover and bring out what is in us. It comes from Satan and spiritual enemies with an *evil* design to bring out sin, and to try whether we will be faithless. From God it never can come with an *evil* design, as shewn in James i. 12—17. Yet he sometimes so tempts us as to make *proof of us*;—thus he did tempt Abraham (Gen. xxii. 1); and so he may lead us like Israel, as Deut. viii. 1—3, but always intending our good; disposing these kinds of providences for the purpose of demonstrating our grace, or revealing our hidden corruptions, that we may be instructed in the life of experience and discipline. We are to count it all joy when we fall into such providential dispensations as prove or exercise us, because such temptations make the upright more holy and more humble. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; that is, that can *bear* the touchstone, and prove that he is sincere in his profession when he is tried,—or that when this experiment discovers the truth of the principle that is in him, he is seen and owned to be one who shall receive the crown of life. But we pray, “Lead us not into temptation.” This appears to mean, do not so leave us to the coldness, sins, or corruptions of our hearts, as that these should put our Lord upon leading us into such temptations or *trials* or provings, as are to humble and distress us by painful detections of our neglected and careless souls. Observe, it is conjoined with, “*but deliver us from evil;*” and I should explain it thus, as if praying, “O Lord! deliver me from the evil of the world, from the evil of a deceitful heart, from the deceivings of Satan; let me not fall into such a state of carelessness, &c. as shall put thee upon the necessity of leading me into situations, or giving me up to conflicts which will correct me by shewing me what a wretch I am ready to become.” Perhaps your own

present circumstances will tend to explain the subject. You are surrounded by temptations or proving occurrences ; the presentation of these new ideas, &c. to your mind has brought to proof your *stedfastness*. Count it all joy that you have been so tempted, for it has instructed you that the Lord is keeping and teaching you. Suppose, on the other hand, that you had gone up to town unconcerned and careless and self-confident,—it would have been necessary to cure you of such evils ; and God might have used *temptations* for the cure, leading you into the present society and scene around you, so as to make you feel that you had sinned in not being more diligent, better informed, and more dependant, since you were not able to give an answer, nor to satisfy your own mind on these points. This would make you unhappy. It ought not to have been needful so to humble you. You would come to God in penitence and grief, as one justly corrected for unprofitableness. It is against such evil and such correction that we pray when we say, “Lead us not,” &c. We have a memorable example of what is meant, in the history of Peter. He was self-confident, and would not believe himself capable of denying Christ : no *words* from Christ could convince him. It was therefore needful to abase him, and cure this vanity by putting him into a situation in which he should be obliged to acknowledge this depraved nature as not to be trusted in. May the Eternal Spirit keep us, my beloved friend, from every degree of such self-ignorance or such lamentable chastisements ; and if ever the Lord is pleased to direct the proving dispensation of temptation to us, may it never be on account of *evil* in us, but for the manifestation of His indwelling kingdom in our hearts !

How rejoiced I shall be to see you once more amongst us, coming from the field of battle, a still more expe-

rienced soldier of the Cross, and ready to unite with us here in seeking to unfurl the banner, and to win poor sinners. I look forward to your proposed time of return with great affection. You will hear all particulars from —, who left us yesterday. What a life of change and vicissitude this is! but it will soon give place to one of endless and abiding bliss. I know not whether you can read this letter. I am writing at my school, after so cold a drive down, that my head has not recovered its proper feeling, and I have no pen or knife but an old one, which will scarcely obey my impulse—excuse me therefore. We have been occupied much by sickness and visitors, so that I am not quite in my usual settled employments and preparations. Remember me to all my beloved friends with you in the truest affection. Thank my sweet C—— for remembering me so lovingly; tell her I love her very much. All here charged me with love to you and yours. Believe me, my *very*, my ever dear friend, yours in the tenderest love of Jesus,

M. S.

LXXXII.

Sick chamber a time for attaining Self-knowledge—Dear Repast—Regular Course of Subjects—Return Home—Circumstances of Individuals.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE unfeigned sympathy of my heart has been with you during the late visitation, by which the Lord has been pleased to make trial of your faith, as well knowing how much of supernatural support is needful under the real experience of such things as perhaps at a distance we contemplate with a degree of comparative independ-

ence. I doubt not the ready fellowship of the Eternal Comforter was with you, for He evermore delights in making his abode where necessity claims his presence ; and I know that usually we are the most abundantly refreshed by heavenly influences when we are most destitute of what external things can give. But I am very anxious to hear from *yourself* how you are, and under what immediate circumstances ; the last tidings which reached me were, that you were better, but still confined to your room. Is it so ? The confinement of this description will perhaps afford you welcome opportunity for that most interesting investigation of *self* which is much aided by quiet and retirement, and which forms one of the most important branches of our present state of discipline ; and probably our Lord does mercifully give his children these occasional seclusions from society and work purposely to promote this great object, and bring us to self-knowledge. I have, I believe, oftentimes proved this parental care, and had reason to rejoice in the issue of a sick-bed and a chamber which opened upon eternity.

How very differently do we look upon these things when brought into such a region ! how empty and how vain are the most splendid possessions of earth, and how much more serious and awful the great concern of the soul's interest in Christ than ever it is apprehended to be on other occasions !

It is delightful then to sit alone and meditate, taking leave of human schemes and views, and directing the intense application of the eye of faith on future scenes ; and rich is the dear repast which sometimes is sensibly spread before our souls, and the given appetite by which we are empowered to feed upon the banquet that abounds in the covenant of Jesus' blood ! How blessed shall we be, my dear friend, when once permitted to

drop this earthly tabernacle, and taken into that full vision of our God which alone can satisfy the never-dying soul !

I shall be glad to know how you resolved as to the course of subjects you are to pursue (for I hope to hear you are strengthening again for work). I am greatly interested in the testimony which you give to Jesus' name, and must ever feel an earnest desire for that clear and decided exaltation of the cross, in all its comprehensive character, which I believe it is your soul's ardent object to proclaim. It appears to me that this is very much promoted in those who hear by a *regular* course of subjects which gradually conduct into the inner chambers of the covenant, and, generally speaking, meet both the ignorance and the prejudice of the human mind in the best form. I think your own judgment acquiesces with mine upon this point, and I shall be much interested in knowing how you proceed.

I have been a traveller since you were here, and only returned to my dear vineyard last Friday, and by sea. Our passage was very unfavourable, so far as wind and tide opposed us, and a rough sea gave us the taste of a storm. I was dreadfully affected by sickness, and obliged to remain two whole nights upon deck, so that even yet I am in some measure disordered and not fit for my work. The temporary absence from home endears every object exceedingly to my heart ; I felt as if I had been months from my little flock, and rejoiced yesterday in having a party at Stonefall, when we enjoyed one of the evenings of the nature of which you are not ignorant. Such intercourse serves to strengthen the sweet bonds of Jesus' love amongst us, and gives refreshing anticipations of that period when we shall walk in the heavenly Zion above and go no more out. I think I enter into the real delight of such opportunities with

much more zeal and spirituality than formerly. As we advance in maturing experience, we obtain a greater power of internal abstraction, combined with greater energy of relative charity, by which we are more prepared both to give and to receive the sweet interchange of spiritual and gracious communion in the Holy Ghost. May Jesus give you, my dear friend, such a flock—such precious pilgrims, willing to tread the narrow way, and bound to your heart and counsel in the power of his grace! I hope you are beginning to feel what such indescribable ties are *experimentally*; but none can tell what multiplied, dear and abiding affections live where a beloved flock has been growing up for years in holy fellowship and oneness in the interests of the soul. O then how unspeakably blessed will the *perfected* affection be, when we meet around the throne of our Beloved—understand the deep counsels of his love towards us, and unite in the eternal songs of praise which celebrate his deeds!

— was with us yesterday; he came over for one night: his work is very abundant, having three churches under his care; and I hope the Lord intends to use him for many souls. But he is not so favourably situated as you are as to liberty, and has been obliged for a season to relinquish a little meeting which he held. This seems hard; but some good is in it, and whatever contributes to subject self-will, and to bring us into humility of faith, will eventually issue in good, however we may suffer under the immediate attendant disappointment.

I heard from — lately; he is engaged with pupils. I do not altogether like such a mixture of avocations; the *ministry* has work enough in itself, if properly discharged. And I think the instruction of youth too is work enough alone—but I suppose he finds it needful in a pecuniary point of view.

I hear little of —— : his health is bad, and I am told T—— sadly disagrees with him. I should rejoice if he had a more healthy and comfortable sphere of action ; yet I have no wish for any of you beyond what God's leadings open out ; convinced as I am, by much evidence, that our own ways are usually opposed to the very objects which we have in view, and that the guidance of our Lord is our safety and our bliss.

T—— is here, but I have seen very little of him yet ; indeed I seem to be a stranger myself ; but all, I hope, is well, and our faithful God still our present help.

Farewell, my dear friend, from your most affectionate friend and mother in our dear Lord,

M. S.

LXXXIII.

Family Comforts—Benefit of Sickness—Publication—Suffering Poor.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I SCARCELY need tell you that my heart affectionately enters into all your domestic prospects, and truly and importunately desires the descending blessings of Jesus to rest upon you and yours ! These mercies will be extended, for our Lord is forward to give, and delights in pouring forth compassions upon the waiting soul ; and since your union has been formed upon principles so accordant with his own blessed mind, you have reason to expect the answerable testimony of his smile.

How precious is the peace which ensues upon faithfulness in our way ! Truly is it a heritage here below. May we ever so take the counsels of our God for our guide, and tread only where He is pleased to

lead. The pilgrimage through which we pass would be greatly more replenished with consolation were we more simply dependant upon the outstretched arm of the Lord, and our prospects heavenwards would break upon us in the richer evidence of favour and of rest. Let us, my beloved friend, thus strive after the life of faith, and press towards the mark.

I rejoice to find that your little circle at home is composed of congenial spirits; you will find the exciting power of this fellowship, and many times a refreshment after labour by which you will be kept from feeling so much of mental exhaustion as often follows after great exertions; and I look upon all your prospects with affectionate anticipations of much individual and relative blessedness. Surely you have reason to say that your steps have been marvellously ordered. I think upon the way in which you have been led, with many admiring tributes to the Lord, and see in such dispensations how faithfulness and truth triumph in the purpose of God. Pray offer my affectionate love to your dear partner, to whom I feel the interest of best bonds, and to whom I hope I may be personally introduced, but if not in this world, another will bring us into knowledge and mutual expressions of the love peculiar to God's dear family.

I received your welcome letter upon my return from the country, where I have been for change of air; not that I have been entirely laid up from duties, for I have been down to my teachings, but principally absent for four weeks, my strength gradually declining and threatening a longer confinement if not attended to promptly. I am now a little better, but still very languid. These are no unwelcome dispensations. There is a sweetness in the quiet hour when unattended with consciousness of *unnecessary* yielding, which is delightful, and affords a precious opportunity for meditation

and prolonged prayer ; and I often think I am greatly indebted to these merciful seasons of retreat for much of the equality of peace which, blessed be God, I enjoy in the midst of trial.

You do not hold out much expectation of my book in its acceptance at —. I am aware that a publication of this kind will have to contend with difficulties, and I am also aware that my circumstances and teaching will render it a subject of suspicion in some minds where I am supposed to be a wild enthusiast. I have counted this cost, but as it was undertaken by the pressing request of some of my friends, I have not felt at liberty to decline the calling, and in a certain circle I believe it meets with acceptance ; this is chiefly with the already devoted and the young enquirer.

— will tell you how the poor have suffered here, and many of our own dear people have been in consequence scattered from us ; but we hope it will be as the grains of salt to spread a savour, and that they also will come forth from the furnace purified—the sorrow has been great and parting painful. But the Lord reigneth, and all his spiritual interests must prosper, for He is the great head of all, and this will ever afford us a quiet resting-place.

Farewell, my dear friend, your truly affectionate, in
Christ,

M. S.

LXXXIV.

Ministerial Prosperity—Variableness of Individuals.

MY DEAR ——,

I TAKE the opportunity which this parcel affords for dropping a line of affectionate congratulation upon the blessed interests of our dear Lord, which are so mercifully prospered through your hand. I should more frequently tell you this, but that I have no time for writing letters, and a mere note is not worth the expence, knowing that your heart is perfectly persuaded of the abiding interest of mine in all your labours of love, and in all your domestic concerns. How plenteous in goodness and in loving-kindness is our eternal Lord. Surely we have reason to extol him from day to day, and to adore that inexhaustible source of all life and love from which we so freely receive. May we ever abide in this spirit of gratitude, and love the Lord with a fixed heart! —— tells me how you are advancing in work, and from him I receive the communications which abundantly refresh me, and I trust hereby we shall all become increasingly united in one spirit, and wrestle more firmly for the outpourings of the Holy Ghost upon this desert earth. There are delightful prospects before us, the harvest is plenteous, and labourers will abound ; and in the present day of grace surely we hail with gladness of heart the near approach of the glory of our blessed Lord. My own soul is constantly excited upon this subject, as I hear of the different scenes of usefulness that open out in the world, and of the ready mind and heart of God's chosen servants towards the acceptance of such opened paths ; and you

would indeed rejoice with me, were you now sitting by my side, and able to listen to details of this description, which I could pour into your ears. But let us delight ourselves in our God, and whether it is through tidings received, or through the actings of faith, rest in the full expectation of the descending universal shower which shall fill the whole earth with fruit!

As to our little flock and its interests, I think, it keeps pace with the promising day ; and although (as you now begin to know by experience) we must expect the exercise of our gracious affections through the variableness of many who are dear to our souls,—yet we have reason to be thankful when the desire to *hear* increases, and when the Lord is in any measure evidently building up his people. Sometimes 'tis done by means of those painful discoveries which are made to the believer under the very state, for which perhaps we are mourning for them ; and could we look intently into the secret counsels of the Lord we should discover that these things are amongst the covenant dispensations, and come under the head of overruled circumstances working together for good. Let those who have to deal with fellow-sinners be quick to apply the things they have individually learnt to the end of supporting them under the pains they feel for the tempted, and to the instructing of their minds as to the best method of proceeding with the exercised heart.

— proceeds in his course to the very great joy of my soul, and truly he appears to be a deeply-rooted plant. We have much opportunity for manifesting this through our Monday-night-meetings, which, though chiefly catechetical, are turned to familiar fellowship in the spirit ; and as they are composed of adults principally, and many young men, he has a blessed occasion given to him to do the part of a helper and of a chris-

tian brother, this he does in unwearied simplicity, and I am sure you will greatly rejoice for him and for me in him. * * * * *

Farewell. Believe me ever your truly affectionate and faithful friend and mother in the Lord,

M. S.

LXXXV.

Covenant Designs—Prosperity of the Flock—Voyage to India.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

TRUSTING that a few lines will be acceptable, I seize the passing moment that I may remind you of the ties which you have in the midst of us, although I am sure that your heart is a faithful witness of these truths. It is always a precious privilege to realize the everlasting hope that makes the Lord's people one in Him, and hence we are ever refreshed by fellowship in the Spirit. O may we prove it yet more and more, and rest in the assurance of our lot with his true Israel!

I am sorry to hear of the indisposition which you so constantly endure, and I pray the Lord mercifully to sanctify it, and to strengthen you in His good time, believing firmly that the work which you shall be privileged to fulfil is according to the ordaining councils of God, and so must be accomplished. How rich is the promise which is given us in these everlasting doctrines of grace, reconciling us to all events which come upon us in the path of duty; as knowing that they all belong to the arrangement of our heavenly Father, and that none of the accompaniments of our way are out of the Covenant designs by which we shall finally know that

all things work together for our good. I believe that the fullest sense of holy delight is opened upon us in those precious experiencies by which the soul grows up into the whole counsel of God; and since it is through tribulation frequently that the secret of the Lord is thus revealed in power, we may truly bless the appointments by which we suffer, as our most welcome visitants.

You will be glad to hear such good accounts of our proceedings in the vineyard. The Lord smiles upon relative exertion, and I trust also upon individual experience. The increase is not only in numbers, but I believe in real feeling also; and the outpouring of the Spirit is as refreshing showers upon our waiting souls. O let us importune the Lord, my dear friend, still to pour down righteousness from heaven, and to give glory to his blessed salvation, by witnessing to his own gracious descent upon the earth in the present power of his invincible purpose! My heartfelt supplications are presented in behalf of you and yours, and I know that we meet in this opportunity at our Saviour's feet.

We have had good accounts of —— since he left us. His voyage was very prosperous, and he hopes many occasions offered in which some good might be done. They had service on board twice every week, and much expression of serious attention was visible. Since his arrival in India he has been appointed to ——, the station that you will remember my brother occupied. To him who was there as a boy it must be an interesting scene. All the family are quite well,—my brother as active as ever, and preaching constantly.

May we ever confide all our cares to the Father of mercies: Who can limit the riches of free and persisting love? Be sure that He heareth, and will help.

Believe me ever yours most affectionately,

M. S.

LXXXVI.

More than customary Devotion needed—Practice in Composition—Arrangement of Time and Study.

MY DEAR ——,

IT is a delight to me to hear from you ; but when your pen lies unengaged in expressing your sentiments to me, I am sure that your moments are given to the requirements which the Lord has upon you. How then can I ask them from Him ? May he possess you, my dear ——, in body, soul and spirit, with an entire and increasing devotion to His praise !

There is no condition equally blessed with that of simple consecration to the service of our Lord ; and it is my continual prayer that the anointing from above may rest upon you, and that all grace and blessedness may abound in your experience and labour of love. O may the riches of the eternal covenant be magnified in the advance of that influence which the Lord has already given you in the vineyard where you work, and may many precious souls be brought in by the testimony of your lips !

I grieve to think you suffer so much from bodily weakness, and that the delicacy of your health affects your lungs, for this will make your exertions painful to you ; but no doubt the dispensation is exactly fitted to the case, and the Lord sees it the best appointment for *you*. On this ground it is accepted, and we know that it shall work together for good. Under such visitations you will be able to enter into what I have so frequently expressed, of the blessedness of seasons wherein the individual interests of the soul are more *leisurely* con-

sidered. And more especially, as your time is so fully engaged when in health, you will learn to esteem the time of sickness a precious grant of love for the purpose of bringing you into closer communion, and more enlarged exercise of heart before God.

There is no state of soul more to be dreaded than that of absorbing consideration of the concerns of others, to the neglect of personal vigilance; and perhaps we might be led into this dangerous state, were it not for the *preventing* mercy of the Lord acting towards us in this way. It is true we keep up a necessary remembrance of our Lord, and of the dependance with which we must go forth to labour in the habitual course which we pursue: but the soul requires something more than this; and unless we have time and opportunity to open the heart fully to the Lord in meditation and prayer, there is, even in the midst of spiritual works, an evident absence of that lively and ardent sense of oneness with Christ upon which so much of our present highest enjoyments depend.

You ask my opinion, my dear ——, upon the expediency of your devoting some part of your time to composition. Certainly, if it is at all within your power to allot any part of your day to this exercise, I should strongly recommend it. I believe it is very useful in strengthening the powers of the mind, and very serviceable in bringing into the habit of compressing a subject; and in fact were you never to preach otherwise than as you do, *extempore*, yet there is no doubt the style you form would be much benefited by the habit of thus methodically expressing your ideas. If you can do only a little in this way, I would in your place endeavour to do that little. Make the trial, and I think you will prove it good.

I know that sedentary pursuits will not do for you;

exercise is necessary, and more particularly in your present state of health ; but if you are a good *manager* of time, perhaps you can accomplish both objects. By rising regularly and by arranging the occupations of each day, so far as it is possible to foresee what may be your probable engagements, you will find that much is done ; and by learning not to despise a few *minutes* when they are offered, but always to have some part of your work ready cut out for that occasion, you will have the more prolonged opportunity less encumbered, and in this way may perhaps obtain time. I say *perhaps*, because I know your habits to be diligent and laborious ; but I counsel you to try to arrange for the exercise in question, at least for a little while. We know not to what particular kind of labour we may be called before we quit this scene of things, and possibly you may have to plead for your Master by your pen ; or should sickness lay you up from the more active work of the body in the vineyard, you might still find a power to be a witness to the truth through the medium of the press ;—it would be profitable therefore to attain to some degree of practice in this part of duty.

We are just now very busy, having our Christmas parties ; forty-five on Wednesday, and fifty-six last night —old people. This is good news to you.

God bless you ever, and make you all that my heart desires,—then indeed you will be blest ! Believe me in truth your most affectionate mother in Jesus,

M. S.

LXXXVII.

Acknowledgment of a Gift—Rising Youth—Consecration of Talents.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

YOUR welcome little tokens of affection would not have remained so long unacknowledged by me had it been in my power to have thanked you by a more speedy reply. When it was put into my hand I proceeded to unfold the several covers with a degree of curiosity, for I knew not from whence the little messenger came; but no sooner did my eye pierce the lawn paper and see the shining colours, than my heart sprang away with the rapidity of the wings of love, and I said, ‘O it is from my dear little D——.’ I need not tell you that the sensation was one of delightful recollection of the sweet hours we were privileged to spend together, nor will you wonder, perhaps, that I kissed the little gift, and that my prayers went up to the Lord’s bosom that he would ever bless you, and make you, my dear girl, to have the wings of a dove, bearing you in simplicity of love to Jesus, away from the noisy, unclean, and restless world, into the hallowed retreats where he communes with the soul.

I think of you very much and very tenderly; to my heart there is always something very interesting in the sight of rising youth; and I speak in sincerity when I say, as your dearest mamma well knows, that towards you I felt from the first of our meeting a powerful drawing of affection. I hope it was the influence of that Holy Spirit who dwells in the hearts of the redeemed, and that we may take this as one of the marks of *gracious* congeniality, or as a kind of sympathy such as will be

known through eternity by the living members of Christ. O let this affection be allowed now in *time* to speak to you out of the fulness of that feeling which desires your establishment upon the eternal Rock, and let me give you the encouragement which my testimony, perhaps, may afford you whilst as a *young* disciple you take up your cross.

I have had opportunities for seeing the privilege of early discipleship both in those who live and in those who die. Many are called away from this transitory scene when scarcely your age, and I have sat by the dying bed of some whose *matured* experience was full of grace and glory. In such instances how blessed the fruit that is gathered from the youthful seed-time! But in the instances where the pilgrimage is prolonged, is it not equally blessed to be advancing every day in enlarged capacities for the enjoyment of God, and in solid attainments by which poor fellow-sinners may be edified and helped? I am sure you will agree with me that such experience is highly to be prized, and my heart's desire and prayer is that you may know it in the powerful demonstration of the Holy Ghost. I look at you in my mind's eye, as I sometimes did when I could see you with my bodily eyes; and when I think how delicate your frame appears, I pray that you may rapidly ripen, against the time when the Lord shall gather you. Or, when I think of the evident buoyancy of your spirits and warmth of your heart, I ask that these, which are precious *talents*, may be consecrated, and in the Lord's hand be used to render you an able and unwearied witness of what Jesus is to his own. O thus, my loved girl, use all your privileges with diligence; mix faith even in the cultivation of your mind when pursuing ordinary studies; love to strengthen your faculties by use, that they may be ready when the Lord may give them work for him;

and bear in mind how he has abounded towards you, my love, in giving you such earthly parents, whose chief ambition for you is to see you consecrated in holiness to the Lord.

I have not yet told you the reason why I could not acknowledge your parcel sooner, and perhaps you do not know from other quarters that I have been very near the everlasting kingdom, so that my present recovery is amazing both to my friends and to myself. I believe I neglected the cold and oppression I felt at my chest when you were here : I thought it would pass away like other colds, and I was unwilling to interrupt my work, but it ended in an attack of inflammation on the lungs, which seemed to be too decided to yield to the remedies applied,—bleeding, blisters, and all the lowering system necessary in such cases to be pursued. A temporary relief was followed by a serious relapse, and in short I have been reduced in my mortal tabernacle to the full appearance of having received my last joyful message ;—joyful, my dear love, as to my own departure, for it is far better to depart and be with Christ. I am, however, by the Lord's will comparatively restored, but still I am not allowed to go from my own apartments up-stairs, or to meet the air, and my medical attendants give it as their opinion that I must not attempt any teaching during the winter months, nor encounter the night air until warmer evenings. I am, therefore, now preparing diligently to employ the season before me in endeavouring to finish my Comment ; so as to be ready, if the Lord will, to renew my relative work in the spring with greater vigour,—but all these things are arranged for us in the counsels of our God, and whatever he may ordain will be welcome and best for us.

And now tell your beloved parents, with my *true* and

fervent, and grateful love, that they are dear to me more than I can express, that I esteem the blessing highly, and thank the Lord unfeignedly for the gift of their sympathy and fellowship with my soul. I hope our Lord will give us renewed opportunities for communion here on earth if we abide in the flesh,—if we depart, still we possess the assurance that when Jesus gathers in his own we shall behold each other there. Tell your dear brother C—— that I pray for him and remember him in real love, and although I know not some of your dear circle otherwise than by name, let me be remembered to them as interested for their best blessings. And believe me your faithfully affectionate friend in Jesus our Lord,

M. S.

LXXXVIII.

Memorials of Praise—Operation of the Lord—Conflicting Opinions—Everlasting Attributes.

WHILST sitting alone in my sick-room, my thoughts have been affectionately turning upon you and yours, my beloved girl, and tenderly and gratefully have I blessed the Lord for those descending blessings under which you live. These thoughts led me to open my desk, and take out your letter from the place where it rested: my eyes have passed over the lines, and in the midst have seen your affectionate expressions of desire to hear from me. The result is as you see; I have taken up my pen, and although but weak in body, obey the dictates of *strong* feeling of soul.

I rejoice that you can number the mercies of the Lord, so as to raise up your memorial of praise, and

yet so as to testify that after all they are *innumerable*. Yes, my dear love, they are indeed countless as the sand upon the shore, and all of them tokens of the unfathomable deeps of covenant-love, out of which they proceed. Mercies are indeed abundantly poured forth upon the whole creation, for “the paths of the Lord drop fatness;” but these communications frequently fall where no return of love is demonstrated; and therefore when they produce responses in which the soul springs forth in praise to the source, we may rejoice in perceiving that peculiar accompaniment of the Spirit which marks them to be *peculiar* mercies, and shed forth from eternal love: it is thus that you can trace the operation of the Lord towards you, and draw the sweet conclusion in reference to your own soul—*I* love him because he first loved *me*. The external circumstances by which, in your situation, you are surrounded, are all calculated to increase this precious assurance of faith; for whilst domestic blessings smile around, the cloud of national storm throws a shade upon human possessions; but in both cases affords a help to faith, which is taught to realize the Lord in every *vanity* of earthly scenes. It delights me to observe how much you have been enabled to know all this in your own bosom, and that the affecting things on which you touch in your letter have all drawn you nearer to the Lord. May you ever possess an unclouded manifestation of the divine presence, and have the Comforter within your heart, thus testifying of Jesus! I enter with you into the cause for joy we have in the stability of your dear brother, amidst the conflicting opinions which no doubt he would abundantly hear whilst in London. There is in some of the opinions that are proposed so much of subtlety, that they might deceive the inexperienced, and shake the more advanced: indeed, the fact

has been proved by the lamentable departure of some from the faith, and the grievous declension of others, who have left the pure and long-tried doctrines of truth for fables and devices of men. These things give pain to the heart, and our love of Jesus and value for souls fills us with sorrow for such attempts of the enemy. Yet we must beware of looking with despondency upon any event—the supreme direction of all things remains in the government established in Christ, and no tumults of the opposing kingdom of darkness can in the smallest particular derange the counsels of our Lord, or thwart one of his designs. We know that the wrath of man shall praise him, and that the remainder of it he will restrain; and that in fact the very convulsions occasioned by confederated powers of darkness are *part* of that government, bringing about the long-desired manifestation of Messiah's universal triumph. We should remark how continually the Lord gives direction to his disciples, whilst others are fearing and perplexed, to be stedfast and expectant—and how the demonstration of our supernatural existence is called out in honour of him by whom it is given and maintained. It is true, we may sometimes feel within us the gathering gloom which the night we contemplate may shed upon us; but this is a frame of mind we are privileged to resist, for the morning is coming, and will drive away all the night; perhaps, too, many of us may be taken away speedily, and come under the word that calls the redeemed to hide in their chambers, until the indignation be overpast. But, be this as it may, we are in *the* chambers, and having the everlasting attributes of God himself to dwell in, we are safe! What an awful evidence the world affords of our alienation and native apostacy from God. O how different the world we now inhabit, and the heaven to which we look; and how

fervently have we cause to say, "Thy will be done, in earth *as* in heaven." Glorious will be the display of the Spirit's triumph, when this daily prayer shall be answered by the subjection of all the inhabitants of earth to the sceptre of Jesus, rejoicing in the kingdom of righteousness and peace. But in our own bosom, my dear friend, the operation of that Spirit may already be known, and the reign of Jesus so pervade the whole of our inward man as to make a kingdom of peace and righteousness within us. Thanks be to our Lord for this possession, and for the pledge we have in this blessing of all that our souls groan to receive.

May you be in health, in the most extensive sense of the word, and be able to send me cheering accounts. Do not fail to give my *very* affectionate remembrances to my highly-valued friends, of whom I always think in close connection with your dear self; for you all are *one*. I trust your beloved mamma is better, and in richest peace. Farewell, my beloved girl; ever believe me your faithfully affectionate

friend in the best of bonds,

M. S.

LXXXIX.

Christmas Engagements—Blessed Government—Quiet Confidence—Adhering to the Word—Subtleties of Satan—Erroneous Doctrines.

I HAVE had great pleasure, my beloved girl, in fulfilling your commission, and my prayers are offered for a blessing upon this work of love. It is a joy to us to feel persuaded that the Lord regardeth even a cup of

cold water, given in the name of a disciple; and in the simplicity of mind which attends this assurance we may prosecute our way, and work as the Lord may appoint, cheerfully leaving *results* to Him. We very much require the large possession of this spirit in the present day—it tends to preserve us from sinking under the weight of an atmosphere which might depress us, did we not know that the Lord reigneth, as much in the *night* as in the *day*. The convulsive state of nations, and of human passions, is indeed awful when contemplated without strong vision of the Lord—but when we realize his blessed government, we rise higher than earth, and are at peace. I cannot say, my love, that I look on with *gloom* as it respects the true church of Christ: whatever may be the deluge, the *Ark* must tower above it. And we have reason to believe that our Lord will take occasion, *by* the swelling waves, to glorify *his* rising mercies and display of power.

I think that he will suffer the gatherings of the hosts against truth, in *order* to interpose for his redeemed, as he did for Israel in the midst of the sea. With this persuasion, of course it appears to me one great and important duty resting upon his people, to preserve a *quiet confidence*, *knowing* that God's arm shall be made bare in the moment when it shall be most glorified thereby. We have likewise a duty, to which I trust the Spirit has roused us—I mean that of adhering to *the word*, and of scrutinizing the doctrines proposed by men, according to that standard. Remember, my beloved girl, that the *most* perilous attempt of the last times is that which would *sap the foundation*: if these “*be removed what shall the righteous do?*” Yet to remove them will be Satan's attempt, either through the deceived or the deceivers; so that if it were possible, the very elect should be deceived. Subtleties,

and signs, and wonders are to form part of Satan's desperate assault, and we can only be kept by the power of God ; yet it is through faith, and by adhering to the light of God's word. You know how fearfully these signs have been fulfilling in the last year, confirming our expectation that Christ is rapidly approaching to his second coming—but teaching us to be on our watch-tower, and not to be carried away by novelties, and subtle interpretations of the word. The opinions lately broached in G——, on which you ask me to say what I think, are certainly what we consider *doctrinally and fundamentally* wrong. The divine nature is presented in a partial view—love drowning justice, and covenant-purposes towards a chosen people put out of sight. My little paper will not allow me to enter upon the point at present. I therefore merely write this to satisfy you, my dear love, as to my *opinion*, which you ask. But considering how much this and the miraculous powers professed are in connection with those who are in error upon the *human nature* of Christ, of course I consider it as a proportionably serious evil, and this *alone* would satisfy me respecting what judgment to form respecting the gifts, &c. I do not mean to pass any judgment upon the *individuals* concerned—to this *we* are not called : it is sufficient for us to remember, that whenever Satan shall attempt his mock work, according to Christ's warning (Matthew xxiv. 24), he will use instruments that are *likely* to impose ; else he would immediately be detected, and lose his aim, and this may be whilst they themselves are *deceived*. And this delusion may for a *season* be allowed, even in those who shall finally be recovered, being a punishment for leaving the simple guide, and for giving heed to fables and speculations. We may derive practical lessons from such things, and by the blessing of the Lord learn to

cease from man, and to be more diligent in private prayer, and less anxious as it respects passing events of the day: thus, my dear love, we shall be increasingly established, strengthened, and settled. I will just add a short but an *affectionate* reply to *your* affectionate question, as to my times of teaching. On Monday, as usual, at seven; on Friday, at seven; on Sunday, to *our own flock*, or by permission to any friends, at half-past one, a meeting which I had suspended for reasons you know, but which I have resumed in a familiar form, because there are so many amongst our poor, especially *mothers of young children*, who cannot embrace other means, but can be spared an hour on that day; on Sunday, at half-past five, also boys and men, about a hundred and twenty, a sort of catechetical instruction, to which no females are admitted, and which is quite private. In addition to these meetings, I have weekly ones in different parts of the town, where the *neighbours* assemble in one room for familiar exposition: Thursday and Tuesday are days for these. Now in spirit you can be with us at the times of meeting—and you will pray for us I know, my beloved girl, that Jesus Christ may be with us, and pour out that blessing which alone can render the work prosperous. Mr. — is wonderfully strong and *full* of work—the place appears to be quite in animation for hearing, &c. My sister is better, but *quite uncertain* in health, even for a day. Maria delicate, but always employed. Our curate *very* much liked, preaching boldly and fervently, with a fine voice and sound doctrine, and thus far very agreeable to —. We have cause to be grateful to the Shepherd over all. Of course you know Mr. — is *young* in the ministry, but seems to be *very* improving, and to possess talent also. May God sanctify it all to his praise. And now, with *true, tender, faithful*

love to my dearest Mrs. ——, and best remembrances to all your dear ones, farewell. Believe me *ever* most affectionately your friend in the sweetest bonds,

M. S.

XC.

Blossoms of heavenly Desire—Discernment of indwelling Sin—Publications—Abiding in Christ—Purposes of God—Assurance.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

YOUR sweet letter was welcome to my heart; the Lord be ever praised for keeping your feet in the way of peace, and strengthening you to wrestle for that inheritance, which, although a free and wonderful gift, is possessed through the appointed means, and yields its riches here below in proportion to the fervency and stedfastness of faith. That you *are* thus kept is conspicuous;—as I have frequently observed to you, the affections which live in your heart must necessarily be considered of supernatural origin; for surely no *native* soil ever put forth buds or blossoms of heavenly desire; and when we contemplate or experience anything of this description, we are constrained to admit, this is the finger of God. Nor is it only in the first growth, but in all the after-maturing, that we behold the work of God, He only being the Author and the Finisher of our faith, whether we consider this faith as descriptive of His personal triumph as the *object* of faith, or as referring to the *experience* of His salvation wrought in the soul.

It is a comfort when the children of God can *hope for us* in respect of this our experience, beholding the fruits which they have reason to consider as of the Lord.

these are the sure parent-root of all other kinds of provocations and darkness. If we will not believe, we shall not be established. Jesus said in comprehensive words, and in answer to an inquiry how to do the works of God—"This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent;" and thus he teaches us how our fruit is found through abiding in Him, and this surely by a vital and *assured* faith. Let our own experience testify how soon we are overcome when we waver and doubt whether we shall be accepted or strengthened; and what may we not undertake when we are persuaded that God is with us and in us of a truth! Our *perseverance*, my dear love, is secured for us: the promise remains unalterable that it being God who works in us, to will and to do, so he who has begun the good work in us will likewise perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. His electing love is from all eternity, with infinite foreknowledge of all that belongs to his elected ones,—his call is consequent upon this eternal purpose, and his gifts are of the same character, both gifts and callings being without repentance or change of intention in him. God is not as man—fluctuating, uncertain; nor is he capable of being frustrated: he has also secured his people *in the Beloved*, so that they are thus addressed, "Elect, the *preserved* in Christ Jesus," (Jude 1; 1 Pet. 1, 2; Rom. viii. 28—39.) Call these passages to your recollection. O they are full of glory to God in his sovereignty of grace, of honour to Jesus in the efficacy of his work, of praise to the Spirit in his invincible perseverance of power and love, and of joy to the humble who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them, and who shall find that the Name of the Lord is a strong tower. They who are *in it* are *safe!* Your life is hid with Christ in God.

The Lord bless you, and make your soul to overflow

in present joys, and your sanctified affections to echo back this strain, and sing praises to the Lamb. When you write, tell me how all your dear ones are. Your last account is not favourable, as it respects the mortal part, although so full of cause for praise in respect of the better interests. I beseech the Lord to give you a lengthened possession of your domestic comfort, and to crown your little circle with health and peace. Give my very affectionate remembrance to my dear friends, your beloved father and mother, whom I ever bear in grateful recollection. I grieve for dear Mrs. M——. O how the Lord has tried her;—but gold reserved for precious use is oftentimes put into the fire. May she be in the Refiner's dear hand, and be able to say with Job, “when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” Thank you, my love, for the *beautiful wreath*,—what a well-adapted present for *Christmas-day*. May we be as a wreath worn on Jesus' head in token of his triumph, and every beautiful flower of the Spirit contribute to display the skill of the divine worker. Farewell, my ever dear girl. I love you very much, and beseech the Lord tenderly to cherish you in his own bosom. Be faithful—be believing—fall into Jesus' arms: nothing can harm you then.

I am ever yours in the tenderest bonds,
M. S.

XCI.

Affectionate Sympathy on the Death of a Friend—Animating Strains of Christian Consolation and Exhortation.

MY BELOVED —,

WITH what affection of sympathy I received the communication contained in your dear brother's letter, you, my love, can well understand—loving you all, as I do, of course I have had my heart much moved with and for you ; and with tenderest feeling I bear you there, beseeching our long-tried and well-known Friend to impart his own efficient help and consolation under your trial. So supported, no burden will be found too heavy, no affliction too severe. Sure I am, my dear love, that Jesus is with you, not only by his ever-present *mercy*, but by his indwelling and unchanging *love*—what then can I propose for comfort which he has not already proposed and applied ! In respect to the dear departed soul every *disinterested* heart will give praise. As our Lord said to his sorrowing disciples, so may we say of our own bereavements—“ If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father.” And in proportion to our spirituality we shall rise, and along with angels, sing Hallelujahs for the release of a *comparatively captive* soul, and its liberation from all the burden of mortality. What is our existence here, my friend, even in its highest measure of holy enjoyment, when compared with that to which your brother is now admitted ? Here we groan—even we—who have the first fruits of the Spirit, longing to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, and sighing after the perfection of the life we have received from the Spirit. No doubt your dear one has

ofttimes thus groaned and thus sighed—no doubt the closet and the field have witnessed to his breathings into the bosom of his God, whereby he has expressed his participation of the mind of the apostle, that “to depart and be with Christ is far better!” His breathings have been received—the arms of his Saviour have been opened, and now—he groans, he sighs no more. Is not this a subject for gratitude? more especially when we consider also the peculiar state of our times, giving a special emphasis to the declaration, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord”—and reminding us that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. For my own part, I feel that it is peculiarly a privilege at this period to be called up higher—if so it be the will of our Lord—although to live is Christ, and we delight to be found in the field of battle, if that is more in accordance with our Master’s will. You would not call back the spirit of your brother to return into prison again; you would not wish for renewed exposure to be given him, to those fiery darts of the enemy that fly so thickly around our shield and against our hopes. O no! let him rest—let him sing—let him exult—let him remain amidst the myriads of the blessed that are above, and to whom we are longing to be united!

These thoughts, my sweet girl, will prevail, I trust, with you all. Your own soul, I am sure, will be enriched by this visitation. You have known your Saviour; you know him in his covenant character, and have experienced the wisdom and grace of his government; and now that you are placed in the circumstances of experiencing the way wherein he gathers his “lilies,” and takes them from his nursery-garden here to his beautiful Eden above, you will admire the work, and trust him too for the period when he will come and gather yourself, my dear —, to his presence on high.

Very soon your own probationary state will close, and *your sighs* for closer fellowship with your God cease for ever, as your brother's have ceased !

Calling off your reflections, therefore, from the individual object you dearly have loved, and leaving him to rest in that bosom of life where he now is, it is well to turn upon the consideration of that period which awaits you, and in which you will find the victory which Christ has obtained over death, *your victory* in him. When we witness the *gentleness* of the work of Jesus towards his dying members, we have a cheering testimony of his triumphs for us ; and this serves to increase our love to him, and our understanding of that glorious redemption which is our only trust. He will be with each individual of his family in *all* seasons : and we may confidently press onwards to the gate which shall let us into the region he has prepared for us. Strive, dear love, to evince to all, that you know *whom* you have believed ; —endeavour to manifest evidently that a believer differs from the unregenerate, and does not sorrow as without hope. This is the time to glorify God in the fire : O let him have the glory—and may you all display what the sufferers displayed to Nebuchadnezzar of old—how Jesus' saints walk in the furnace, *loose, unhurt, and with their God* !

The affecting detail your dear brother so kindly sent me exhibits what I desire, and shews you all to my realizing vision in the possession of holy resignation and faith. I bless the Lord for this. 'Tis well, however, to watch and pray, for we are strangely varying creatures, and need to have our feelings of grace nourished and cherished within us ; else we may sink from our elevation into a lower experience, and begin either to repine or to forget the strength of the resolution we at first exercised. These things therefore we must retain

through the energies of faith. The bosom of a parent must needs be agonized at the loss of one who is another self, and especially one from whom comfort was so plentifully drawn ; yet a parent *can* rejoice, even under present privation, on the ground of knowing to what an honourable security the child is advanced. Brothers and sisters tenderly bound up together must needs be sensible of a desolating stroke, when the tie seems unbound in order to take out one of the little living group ; but these *can* rejoice when, following the chosen one with solicitude to see what is done with him, —they behold the heavens opened to their brother, crowned and blessed. Friends and relations tenderly interested in the objects of their admiration and love will necessarily heave a sigh of affection, when these objects are seen no more in this world ; but when they look upon the demonstrations given in and through them, of the security of all who trust the salvation of the Lord, they can rejoice ; and taking courage at the token, they, notwithstanding temptations, fear or doubts, can derive benefit from the example, and learn to exercise more *child-like* affiance on the faithfulness of the Lord ! All this *can* be ; but the blessing is retained *through* watching and prayer ; else the enemy may find an inlet to the heart, and so working upon excited natural feeling, may rob us of the proportion of enrichment which affliction is calculated to yield. I seem, my beloved friends, (although addressing my dearest —) to be writing to you all, for I have you all in my bosom, in my thoughts, and in my prayers. May the Eternal Comforter be your present joy,—and then all is well ! And, O let us each be looking more intensely into the covenant fulness, and more perpetually to the home we have above ; then transitory inconveniences belonging to our journey will lose much of their importance.

My reply to your dear brother would have been by return, had it been in my power; I have not had you less tenderly in my mind and heart, but I was not at Stonefall at the time—some particular business, which occupied me almost night and day, in order to save Mr. C——'s time of returning from London, took me to Knaresborough, and left me no quiet hour wherein to express my heart's fulness to you.

Let me hear from you, my love, as soon as you can comfortably write to me; and give my affectionate thanks to your brother for writing to me, and tell him how sincerely I pray that he may be anointed richly by the Spirit, and have every holy experience enlarged through this sorrow! And tell that dear brother C——, of whom I have so affectionate a recollection, that I trust his young heart will be filled with fervent love to Jesus, such as will move him to love and appreciate the ways of his Lord, even although they are afflictive. In short, tell to all and take to your dear self whatever christian love can proffer from my heart to yours.

Ever believe me, in dearest bonds, yours, my beloved ——,

M. S.

XCII.

Affectionate Solicitude—Confidence in the Lord—Acceptable Minister.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

You have been very much present with me in my thoughts, during the last few weeks, in a way which has made me feel anxious to write and express my heart's affection, and notwithstanding my press of occupations

at this season, I feel it quite full in my heart to strive to obtain this half-hour, if but to send you a *half* letter. Perhaps, my love, the circumstances of your dear country, along with the call upon the Lord's children placed in such a situation of trial, may be one cause of the outgiving of my sympathy in a more than ordinary way, and since we all bear you all before the Lord in prayer, no wonder that my dear D—— takes a prominent place in the group of beloved friends. May Jesus, as head of his church, give unto you, his precious members, that living *energy* of his love which is adapted to your circumstances, and sustain you by his own supernatural strength, which we know makes his people more than conquerors, and enables them always to glorify Him. Perhaps I have told you before that I am frequently filled with admiration of the manner in which he, the Lord, adapts his gifts and operations in the true christians of I—— to the arduous duties to which they are eminently called,—the spirited energy of nature is sanctified, and along with this, generally speaking, there is great clearness in doctrine, so that able advocates and fearless soldiers in the cause of Christ are thus raised up where darkness and diabolical stratagem and force are most decidedly to be met and combated. This being the case, we may likewise be assured that for every moment of trial the consolation of the Lord's salvation will be experienced; therefore, my precious girl, whilst I tenderly feel for you, it is not with any desponding thoughts, for God is your God, and His everlasting arms are underneath and around you. And in fact what is the situation of any of God's people;—are we not all in an enemy's country? *Kept* by the power of a covenant friend! And what though in visible things and external circumstances we may seem to differ from each other, we are nevertheless all clad in *armour*, which we are

bound to use, and owe all our peace or victory to the captain of our salvation. We in our isle have much to apprehend as it respects divine judgments; for surely as a people they have been awfully provoked by us; yet let us not be cast down; the cry of many goes up in the incense of Jesus's all-prevailing merit. And One there is on high and around, who will not cease to render the acceptableness of that merit conspicuous by the answers of mercy, which in virtue thereof descend upon the earth and church. It is our privilege to "fear no evil tidings," and to have a heart that standeth fast, trusting in the Lord. May the eternal Spirit strengthen us more and more to apprehend this privilege as our own. Continue to cheer me by communications *respecting you all*; your letters make me *one* at your fire-side, or in your family circle, and are *very* interesting to me, for I love you all, and bear *all the branches* as well as the loved stock in my heart and prayers. We go on in *laborious* work, for it continually increases, and, thank God, though we have occasional weaknesses of body, we are kept at work, and receive strength for the day and hour. We have too a *very acceptable* curate at present, whom God acknowledges, and who gathers *large congregations*; and all in these things is prosperous with us, and I hope also in the *spiritual* increase; but this is known only to the Lord. I must *hastily* conclude, I am called away.

The Lord bless you ever—ever; believe me your true and tenderly affectionate friend in dearest bonds,

M. S.

XCIII.

Advantages of Sickness—Humiliation—Self-distrust—Invisible Defence—Anticipating a Meeting.

LONG since, my beloved friend, would I have written to you, but my every hour has been filled by indispensable engagements, until the last two weeks, in which I have been suffering by indisposition, along with most of our family and most of our people in the town. It has been with us a remarkable unhealthy season, and we have had many affecting deaths; but, blessed be that living Head, from whom all supplies are given by which his body is cherished, we have been held up in cheerful delight in his will, and have our cup made *very sweet* by the mixture of covenant mercies—mercies out of which, my friend, we may take what will render every appointment welcome. You know my mind and my feeling upon the subject of *sickness*; to me it is always acceptable, as precious opportunities are afforded thereby for closer, at least, I had better say, more *prolonged* enjoyment of private converse with my God; and hereby I trust I am internally strengthened, both for individual and relative responsibilities.

Our increased experience, my beloved friend, confirms us in the sense of our own insufficiency for *any* spiritual duty; and whether it be in keeping our own vineyard, or in working in that of another's, we require the constant direction and strength of the Lord. How marvellously he produces this conviction, and how graciously he sanctifies it! I am sometimes filled with wonder at its excellent operations in this respect, seeing how the needful *self-prostration* is effected, and how the equally necessary *lifting-up* of the whole man is

secured ; so that our humiliation is not allowed to degenerate into despondency, nor our self-distrust into indolence. Surely this is marvellous, for we know that the *natural* consequence of being mortified by a sense of individual ignorance, weakness, and worthlessness, is to destroy expectations and dishearten us. But the Lord will instruct us in the *nature* of the spiritual existence by which we are animated; and thus we learn how out of *weakness* we are made strong, by a supernatural strength perfected in that weakness. This is the only way by which we triumph over every discouragement from within or without, and go on in our conflict unmoved and confident. If we possess the assurance that our gracious Lord has this intention in all our painful moments, how patient and grateful should we be!—or if, indeed, he has in measure produced the simplicity we need, how should our hearts utter his praise, and our steps be buoyant and joyful! In the present times, with the church such a frame of mind is peculiarly desirable; her enemies are mighty, and the confederacy is strong; but her Friend is *almighty*, and the bands of the wicked shall be broken asunder. Could we but realize more powerfully the invisible defence which is round about the Lord's spiritual Zion, we could not have a fear; for what weapon can prosper against a people kept by the Lord as his peculiar treasure?—yea hid as the “*Apple of his eye!*” There is a beautiful passage in Isaiah iv. 5, which, although relating in the first place to the purged Israel in the latter days, has its full application in respect of the redeemed in every age; and I meditate upon it sometimes with joy. The words I refer to are, “Upon all the glory shall be a defence.” Surely we are *his* glory—surely *we* are by privilege and unison with him glorious in and by him—and surely upon all

this glory the defence of omnipotence in covenant is resting! O let us believe it, and in every time of threatening evil shall tune our harps, yea even by the waters of Babylon!

I have before expressed to you the delight it gives me to see how the Lord's army in I—— is made valiant and mighty in the midst of the battle; and I have frequently expressed to many how much we should notice the *adaptations* of the Spirit's grace to the *circumstances* of the believer—for whilst we here have been ready to sympathize with the church, not only in her real trials, but in what we would imagine of her *distressing fears*, fears are kept far away from you all, and you confidently abide in your lot. May the Holy Ghost have the glory, for surely this is his work. What an *awful* machination is that to which you refer in your letter, and whereby *parental* authority even is to be prostituted to so base a service to Satan. Ah! what will not Satan suggest against our God and his Christ?—what will not depraved, deluded man attempt in his mad career of human policy and desperate fight? But even these things work together for good, by bringing out the soldiers of the cross more visibly, and by purifying the hidden Church. May the outpouring of the Holy Spirit rest upon your revered, your precious parent, in his arduous scene of labour for Christ; and may heavenly wisdom and soul-cheering peace be his abundant possession. Truly I ask this in his behalf, and your heart will say Amen.

Thank you, love, for giving me little histories of your dear ones; I cannot tell you how interesting they are to me, and how powerfully and sweetly they bring you all before my mind's eye. May blessings rest upon you all!

It grieves me to have to believe that the indisposition

of your beloved parent should be the cause of bringing you once more near us. May the Lord be pleased to strengthen and spare his valuable life, for surely it is an awful void, when in such times as these the Lord is pleased to remove the salt from the earth; and though his people are taken from the evil to come, we cannot but be gratefully sensible of the patience and mercy which lends them a little longer to bear witness of the truth in the world; but in all these things, my love, our faith accepts the better wisdom of our God, who, as bearing the government of all things upon his own covenant-shoulder, arranges every event so as to establish his own glory; and with this we who love him are satisfied. I believe that He is in great power preparing his church for himself, and amidst other blessings bestowed upon her is producing in her a spirit of simplicity and singleness of eye, in which perhaps he has seen her of late defective, and which we know to be so essential a possession at all times, but more especially when his coming draweth nigh. Blessed are they who, when he cometh, shall be found in the dispositions which such figures signify. May we, my dear girl, be anointed with the purifying unction, and hail his coming, in whatever way his manifestation may be given.

But let me not fail to tell you with what a loving heart I anticipate the refreshment of our renewed communion. I long to see you and yours, and I trust we shall meet in the Spirit, with the testimony of that loving kindness which blest us in our first ever-to-be-remembered introduction to each other. Many great and heart-affecting things have been with us all since that period, which will serve to give increased interest to our renewed greeting, and in all we shall have occasion to testify that Jehovah Jireh is still the memorial of our God.

Farewell, my beloved friend; pray write to me, although I am not able to do what I would in this way. My heart's love is with you—the Lord evermore bless you. I beg my kindest Christian love to your precious parents and all yours, and believe me ever your faithfully affectionate friend in the dearest bonds,

M. S.

XCIV.

Supports—Eyes half opened—Enlargement in the inward Life—Comprehensive Passage—Doctrine of Reprobation and method of using—Training to Prayer—Christian Liberty—Service of Christ—New Zealand.

IT is indeed a very long time, my beloved friend, since we had any communion; but we always know that the interruption is not one of heart and affection, but that we are pressed upon by occupations whenever the silence happens. I am sure for my own part I can truly say so; and could you but look in upon us sometimes, and witness the overflowing fulness of our schools, &c., you would not wonder that I should find a difficulty in getting a few hours for epistolary intercourse. However, the kingdom will soon be ours, my friend; in which we shall, I trust, possess uninterrupted enjoyment of this sweet privilege in a more exalted and more intimate degree!

It is one of our sweetest supports in this time of trial, to look forward with the saints of old to that eternal weight of glory which is reserved for us, and where so many combined delights are prepared for the heirs of life. O may we have eyes of faith so strong as to pierce the veil, and look through time into eternity:

may we behold enough to animate—sufficient to cheer! The conflict sometimes appears long and tedious; but if we contrast our present fleeting endurances with the everlasting joy that shall be upon our heads, surely we shall find “the garment of praise” even here, and sing on our way the hallelujahs which become the redeemed of the Lord.

I observe what you say, that formerly your imagination received many truths before your heart. I believe, my beloved friend, this will generally be acknowledged by the children of God. Indeed so much is it the case, that frequently we are ready to suspect that former professions and feelings have been the mere effect of excited nature; and sometimes we are hereby brought into the temptation of disputing our own past evidences, and of robbing the Spirit of the praise due for His visitations at that period. The truth is, our eyes are but half opened when we emerge from spiritual death. The Lord has many things to say to us, but we cannot bear them, and with the gentleness of a nurse, He carries us in his bosom, and gently leads us into a brighter way. When brought under the fuller beam of His countenance, corruptions are discovered lurking in the heart, which we did not suppose could exist there, and mysterious depths seen in the counsels, the methods and grace of Christ, which rob us of sufficient expression, and bring us to adopt the Apostle’s exclamations—on one hand crying out, “O wretched man that I am;” on the other, “O the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” But shall we not rejoice in such enlargement in the inward life? O yes, my beloved friend, we will glory in every thing which exalteth the name of our God, and be content with John the Baptist’s declaration—“He must

increase, I must decrease." What are we in fact until we are laid in the dust? or where can we find a refreshing draught suitable to the thirst which is in our hearts, until we can say, "All my fresh springs are in Thee!"

I have had some anxieties about you, knowing you to be surrounded by many in whom a spirit of cavilling and of proud inquiry was found. I feared lest by any means Satan might shake you in those simple and precious truths which are revealed as the foundation of our hope;—but the Lord keepeth the feet of his saints; and whatever dangers may encompass our path, we may say from time to time, "the snare is broken, and we are delivered."

I often admire that simple but comprehensive passage—"The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." How expressive of the glorious purpose which secures the heirs of promise, and glorifies itself in ordaining them through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience. May we embrace the truth in the teaching and the power of the Holy Ghost, and nothing ever prevail to darken that single eye which is always attended with the promised privilege, a "body full of light!"

Why, my dear friend, do you stumble at the doctrine of reprobation? Can you read the Scriptures, and deny its being found therein? Look into the texts to which you are referred in the little collection, and you will find that, however disagreeable to natural feeling and earthly wisdom, it makes a part of divine revelation. I feel with you that it is a subject to be treated with discretion and judgment. I have also arranged it in my scheme sent to you; not with election, but as following upon the corruption of the heart—as being

less likely to startle the inquirer. But whilst we, my friend, may reason in this manner, we should be careful not to fall into the error of partially giving the word of God, and remember that it was one of Paul's consolations and assertions, "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." True, as St. Peter affirms, there are some things in Paul's writings hard to be understood, which men of unstable minds wrest to their own destruction, as they do also the other Scriptures; but this is by no means an argument to prove the lawfulness of *omitting* such parts as we may object to, for by this reasoning all persons would be at liberty to extract their rule of faith or practice according to their own judgment, and thus the divine word would be rendered amenable to the opinion of ignorant and fallen man. In discoursing on such a subject, I should endeavour to take the passages simply as they are—speak upon the tremendous effect of sin—and the danger of perishing in it, lest we should bear such marks upon us; and shew how in sovereignty Jehovah judgeth, how our minds should bow to His revelation, and faith should live upon the assurance that "the Judge of the whole earth will do right." I do not doubt, my dear friend, this subject will be graciously reconciled to your heart and mind, the further you go on your way, and that it will be enough to you to see that God has said a thing, to make you embrace it, remembering that we are to leave effects with Him who ruleth all in all.

You ask my opinion upon the expediency of young people being trained to pray with each other. I have found it, even when it has not been introduced by the direction of a teacher, to be attended with the bad consequences you fear, in many instances. Some who have a talent towards it become elated, and others who

have not are discouraged. Yet I think I should not totally discountenance the custom, for if properly conducted it must bring down a blessing. It seems better not to train them *formally* to it, but rather to mark, if possible, where particular seriousness is manifested in any, and then unaffectedly to bring such forward, without its appearing to be done in any particular way either to themselves or their companions. I do not allow my girls to do it, except in particular cases, or in visiting any sick companion. The young men do it constantly, but then they are older and more experienced, perhaps; they have also regular meetings amongst themselves, when they alternately take the conducting of it. But, after all, much depends upon the disposition, and the degree of consistency evidenced. I think, however, I should esteem it dangerous with any in their first profession, and better to come out as belonging to their state of grace.

It appears to me, relative to your other question, respecting attendance upon churches where the gospel is not preached, that much must depend upon circumstances. I think, were I in such situation, I should regularly communicate with the established church, and if I felt no personal injury I should abide there, with prayer for the enlightening of the minister, attending upon any weekly opportunity on other days where I could hear the truth. So much seems to be desirable where we have to defend our principles from a reproach thrown upon us by the ignorant world, who pretend that we undermine the establishment, &c. &c.

As far, therefore, as a good conscience will allow, it is surely our part to vindicate the spiritual amongst us from such an aspersion, showing how firmly we are attached thereto. Yet there may be cases where the soul might seem to languish without its proper food,

and where faith and love, not being so lively and independent of outward means, might experience great decay. In such circumstances, and should this prove the case, I should then suppose it our first duty to frequent the place where we found this evil prevented, and the increase of the hidden life communicated.

In all such situations we must be governed by existing circumstances, for the service of Christ is liberty, and His people but one church and one body wherever they are.

May the dews of heaven rest upon you and all yours, and make you the pleasant plants of the Lord's vineyard! What else have we to be anxious about? Nothing is important, in fact, but as it leads to the advancement of our preparation for eternal life; and when this passing life is over, O how empty and vain will everything appear that has not had Jesus Christ in it. May we realize this truth with increasing power, before the time comes when we shall lie down upon our bed of death! Then the right arm of Jesus shall embrace, and his left arm sustain, with rich witness of His faithfulness and truth; and as to live is Christ, so shall we taste that to die is gain!

I am writing almost in the dark. The shades of the evening are coming on, and I am sitting in a quiet room at Stonefall, where I am for a few days. September is a trying month to my body, and I find it so very much at present. I had purposed, when I sat down, to give you a long account of the intended voyage to New Zealand, should the Lord appoint that missionary labour. But there is too much of importance and interest in it for the little paper which remains, and I must write again upon this subject. Perhaps from some of your correspondents you will have heard of it. Pray for us, my friend, that the eternal Spirit

may govern all our counsels and glorify Jesus in and by us.

I bid you farewell, expecting a few of the flock up here for an evening meeting. May the Lord in all his covenant grace be in your soul a rich spring of everlasting life and peace.

I am in truth your faithful and affectionate friend,

M. S.

XCV.

Opening of a Correspondence.

I HAVE, by this post, been favoured with the letter of my anonymous friend, and lose no time in expressing the openness of my heart for any further communication, on which our heavenly Master may be pleased to ordain a blessing. To my soul it must necessarily prove as a refreshing shower from above, when the Lord is pleased thus to acknowledge the labour of love to which he has vouchsafed to consecrate me ; and my tribute of grateful praise has been offered for the contents of your letter. I know not to whom I am addressing myself, but I know I must be speaking to one who is loved by Jesus, and this is enough to beget confidence. Believe me therefore, dear christian friend, possessed of affections prepared to sympathize with you in whatever you may wish to consult me upon, and that along with yourself I will ask the Almighty Spirit to give his unerring witness and blessing where it may be required. This, I suppose, is all that I need say at present to assure you of my desire and hope that He who has mercifully

been with us through the medium of books, will, in the same power, impart a blessing through letters.

I never received any intimation of a packet for me ; I am obliged by your having designed this communication. In the hope of receiving a letter soon from your hand, allow me now to subscribe myself, in the affection of Jesus' Spirit, your very sincere,

M. S.

XCVI.

To the same—Peculiar Sympathy and Evidence—Mark of Humility—Obstacles—Poetical Offerings—Hampering Fetters—Warning Voice—Speculations.

YOUR interesting little parcel, my beloved fellow-pilgrim, reached my hand last Thursday, and I am taking the earliest opportunity to express the sympathy which I feel with you on all the communications that my eye has been perusing. May ours be a holy sympathy, such as the Eternal Comforter maintains in souls that are united in Jesus ; and may all our exchanged thoughts come to each other richly impregnated with the unction that is from Him ! To this prayerful desire I am sure your heart will immediately ejaculate its earnest Amen !

We, my friend, who have been taught that the Lord ordereth the steps of his people, have reason to exercise lively faith in the present correspondence. The whole has been of Him, and to Him a tribute of praise shall be returned. You almost forbid me to exercise a judgment upon your christian state before we meet, and your reason is such as I can fully appreciate. I know that letters are sometimes unfaithful representatives of the character of the writer ; nevertheless, there is some-

times an irresistible kind of witness that attends them, which may be called a kind of touch between souls; and when this peculiar sympathy is felt, perhaps we may be justified in yielding the heart to the impulse of free confidence. It is this I feel to you; in this sentiment let us be agreed, and speak freely whatever may arise in our hearts upon the blessed interests we mutually love.

After reading the several letters contained in the parcel, I am disposed to repeat my first assurance, that I address one "who is loved of Jesus." Dispositions such as are wrought in you, my friend, are not of an equivocal character; we cannot find it difficult to determine whether we love Him, whilst we are conscious of such steady beating of the pulse for His name, His kingdom, His smile. These being the beloved interests which animate our way and occupy our breast, there can be no doubt this is love! And it necessarily follows that He loveth, for assuredly no beam but one from His countenance could have prevailed to penetrate, so cold, so dark, so dreary a region as a human breast. Wherefore I feel the more persuaded of the truth, and rejoicingly call to mind the apostle's testimony—"We love Him *because He first loved us.*" It is our fault when we refuse to accept the blessings which such an assurance affords, or when we are reluctant to believe the warrant which we possess of this confidence. And very frequently it is only a subtle feature of pride, hiding itself under a mask of humility; since, if we are quite sure that we are nothing, and that we *never can be anything* in which divine complacency can rest, save as we are contemplated by an act of sovereign grace, we must rationally conclude that we are privileged to lay hold on the covenant in its joyful fulness, at *first*, equally as we are at *last*, if only the Spirit has wrought

in us the conviction of misery, and placed us before the cross alone for our life.

I open our correspondence then, it seems, my friend, with an act of love ; for earnestly I would urge you to become recumbent on your covenant God with the simplicity of a little child,—a disposition which self-renunciation is sure to produce when effected by the Spirit's teaching. I believe that our Lord greatly delights in such a frame of mind. To take Him as freely as He gives Himself is to correspond with His intention and loving heart. And O why do we grieve Him by a doubt, when He has demonstrated His tenderness to us, when we were outcast and in our blood. I know that this affiance is like every other part of the heavenly life—a gift from above ; but I believe that our natural propensity is to place obstacles in the way of its entrance, instead of eagerly welcoming the grace ; so that we need to watch over our hearts in this respect.

But now, my beloved friend, let me turn to the several interesting points on which you desire my thoughts. I have read your little poems, with great interest ; there is an originality in the style that is very engaging, and I think might be calculated to arrest the attention of those who are principally addressed by it ; and were I to judge of the expediency of giving them to the public, I should say, *Do so*, and I should expect a blessing on the gift. It is of importance to supply the youthful mind with little poetical offerings, fraught with *sound doctrine*. Usually children are most disposed to treasure up what is in rhyme ; and when it is given them with clear views of truth, it is laying up a blessed provision. May the blessed Spirit of the little flock counsel you and prosper you !

Perhaps I may appear to you to give my advice with too much decision as to the propriety of coming forward

at once in the work ; but it appears to me that we have only to act with simplicity and make the trial. If the Lord wills the work, He will uphold it ; and if the *work* be not upheld, the *motive* will find a place in His bosom, and will be tenderly received and blest. In this way, my dear friend, I have hitherto been led, and I find it most accord with the peace of the soul ; it frees us from a load of solicitude, and cuts off those hampering fetters, which we form by our hesitation and doubt. Forgive me if I seem to speak with too much determination : our engagements, you know, are of pressing importance ; the battle is real and the adversaries many. The time is come when every soldier of the cross must venture forth, trusting his all to the Captain of Salvation. And whether we occupy a foremost rank or are in comparatively subordinate posts, vigour and energy are manifestly required.

How much we feel alike upon the questions which have been so warmly discussed of late respecting prophecy, &c. My heart bounded to yours as I read your sentiments respecting the temper and spirit of some of its advocates. Alas ! my friend, it seems that there is great need to remind christians so engaged, of the plain exhortations of the scriptures, respecting peace and charity, and that the warning voice is almost forgotten, “ If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” Assuredly “ the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” These are unlawful weapons for the disciples of Jesus ; and when such a spirit is demonstrated, it is the drawing of the sword which Jesus prohibited. It has grieved me in my very soul ; particularly as it has in many instances excited a prejudice against the subject of prophecy : for when minds will not discriminate, and when they are *indolent* also, they readily seize upon any ex-

cuse for attaching *bad consequences* to the study of such things as they are indisposed to examine. It is also to be lamented that in this subject a spirit of speculation has been indulged ; and thus the enemy has obtained an advantage. Let us hope that God will shew to those persons that they are in error, so far as they allow themselves in curiosity and vain philosophy ; and let us not be deterred from rising as with eagle's wings to the glorious heights to which the Spirit invites us. An adventurous flight must ever be safe whilst He is our guide ; and the very error which we grieve to behold in others may, by the mercy of the Lord, prove salutary to us by acting as a caution to our souls. I cannot help thinking that Satan has been specially active in the business, and that, alarmed by the study of these interesting truths which are so much calculated to animate the expectations of the church, he has attempted thus to envelope the pursuit in cloud, and to alarm the minds of men.

But in what regards the human nature of our Lord here, my beloved friend, an evil of a much more deadly and subtle kind is veiling itself. Oh ! my beloved friend, are not these the *perilous last times* ! Do we not remember Jesus' words—“*If it were possible*, they should deceive the very elect.” Do we not remember also that it is with “Lo ! here is Christ, and lo ! there” that these delusions are to appear. Do we not see the very fulfilment before our eyes of what he so graciously forewarned us to expect ! Let us therefore stand firm and obey His words ; “Go not after them,” blessing Him for the impossibility intimated in the—“*if*” it were possible.

I am come to the end of my paper, but not to the end of all I would say. Accept thus much however from a warm heart, prepared dearly to love you in the

sweetest bonds. And be ready, my friend, to tell me all you would tell, and trust me to be willing on all occasions to communicate whatever God may give to such a feeble instrument to say. May I ask to be remembered, in Jesus' love, to your interesting circle. Farewell, my very dear friend; as such I address and love you in the union that saints delight to realize. So that I am in truth your very affectionate sister in the blessed Jesus our Head,

M. S.

XCVII.

Covenant God—Means of Grace—Free Visits through the Word—Instances—Retirement, &c.—Emblems on Seals.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

THERE seems to have been a secret sympathy of spirit between us, particularly in action for the last few days, as I discover by your dear letter which I received this morning. Much have you been in my thoughts, and I have frequently expressed by words my solicitude to have a quiet hour that I might dedicate to this sweet employment. The hour is given and with it sweetness also, for it is a refreshing privilege to commune with a kindred soul. This would have been sooner expressed, my friend, had I not been unusually occupied by much sickness under our roof; ending, as the last subject it has been commissioned to visit, in an attack upon my dear child, who has suffered by violent fever during the last fortnight, but by our Lord's mercy is now recovering. It is well to be allured into the wilderness from time to time, that when in it we may see how lovely

flowers grow, even in the desert, springing up on every side where Jesus is, and shedding their fragrance even along the weary waste—nor would I relinquish for any earthly enjoyments, such soul-assuaging joys. It is in such situations, my friend, that we experimentally know the supernatural life of faith, and that it is by the powerful operation of the Holy Ghost we are raised above nature into our proper existence. How precious our Lord is in thus proportioning His impartations to our circumstances and dispositions;—O how He aboundeth in grace in having imparted an influence which invincibly elevates the heart and constrains it to rest in the only true source of satisfaction! But, my beloved friend, it lays us under a great responsibility, both as to watchfulness against too great an adherence to the creature; and also to such a measure of devotion to our Lord as may accord with the capability he has given to love Him. And as all divine love is wrought by divine power, we will open the altar of our hearts to our soul's beloved, and ask Him to kindle there the vehement flame. It is a consolation to us that the spirit descendeth *freely*, and that He worketh invincibly; it is a joy to us that he is pledged as a covenant God to maintain His own influence within us; and we may pass to our final state of perfection in the quiet assurance that He will not fail in any part of the work which consecrates us to himself. It is altogether delightful when we are privileged to know that he is in us by this eternal covenant, and when we realize his presence by the pure fervors that warm the breast.

Yet, so long as we are in the body it appears usually that a "*needs be*" is found for exercises that have a mixture of pain in them. I suppose this generally arises from our obstinate propensity to *self-seeking*, which frequently exists in a subtle form of self-righte-

ousness, and is betrayed by an evident disposition to take too much of complacent pleasure in our own sanctification. There seems to be nothing we are so slow to learn experimentally, as justification by the righteousness of another. Hence we create a kind of necessity for a painful conviction of dissatisfaction and conscious short-coming, learnt sometimes through great fluctuations in our own frames of feeling. Let us not strike on this rock, my beloved friend, but seek grace to renounce not only our evil but our holy self, if I may so speak, for blessed and necessary as is a state of sanctity, it was never designed as a substitute for the perfection of that righteousness of Christ which alone can justify.

I enter with deepest sympathy into every thing you say of your dear self and your various interests and movements. Will you be placed near very refreshing streams when you go into —? It is a comfort to have the means of grace opened, as channels through which pure waters flow, and I shall rejoice for you if this be the case; nevertheless you will always live beneath the smitten rock, and the waters which issue thence are always pure. When it is by His providential appointment that we are deprived of external supplies, he always makes amends by full-flowing salvation out of His own more immediate manifestations, therefore about this we need not be careful. In my past pilgrimage I have had much of such experience, and as in the first instance saving acquaintance with my Lord was obtained by His own free visit through the word independently of any other instruments, so has He ever since been pleased to make frequent choice of this way of intercourse with my soul, rendering times of apparent privation those of richest repast.

There are some instances, my friend, where the Lord does seem to depart from the more ordinary methods of

his working ; no doubt for some special purpose ; for all His ways are directed by unspeakable wisdom and infinite foreknowledge. My own judgment now convinces me that I have been trained by Him, not only as is best for my own soul, but in a gracious adaptation of the method, to those circumstances into which His blessed will has placed me ; and many times I contemplate the past with an excitement of admiration and wonder unspeakable. I mention this as it has flowed through my reflections respecting *yourself*, and that we may stimulate each other in trusting and admiring our divine companion, such as *He is !* On His arm we lean,—in the clefts of His side we shelter ourselves,—and in his bosom we abidingly repose ; wherever we are, therefore, we carry our refreshments, yea our special life, with, and in us.

I have, through necessity, given up the intention of visiting Ireland. My sister is an invalid, and it seems not desirable to leave her. I am her chief nurse, and she would need me in time of suffering. Much as I love some dear friends in Ireland, I also love my home, my little flock, and all the precious work around me, and I am also a great lover of retirement ; yet how differently God has determined—and blessed be His name, this works for good in His dear hand, for whilst I exceedingly love my working-hours, I find an unspeakable gratification in those which are set apart for the only one friend “who sticketh closer than a brother.” I know that this is a great blessing, and it serves very much to preserve the mind and soul from distractions and sufferings occasioned by mixtures in the professing church, which necessarily try the heart, and from many other little grievances that might interfere with comfort in the soul.

You affectionately desire to know something of my

occupations, &c. I find it necessary and *good*, to be very *methodical* in the distribution of time, &c., so that each day has its previously-arranged work, unless some unexpected hindrances arise, which is not often with me. The division is between private duties, writing, and the work at Knaresborough, where I have meetings, one on Monday evening and one on Friday afternoon. I have a meeting on Sunday from half-past one till three, in which I have a more familiar exposition for my own friends—also one on Sunday evening from half-past five 'till seven, consisting of boys and men only, who are catechised, with a simple exposition of the subject on which the meeting turns; on Saturday evening we practice singing for the public service of the Church; assembling such of our flock as are willing to consecrate their talent freely to the Lord. This is an interesting occupation, and brings together some dear disciples; and the rest of my duties consist of visiting the sick, private interviews, and small classes for social communion, &c., &c. My dear child has three hundred girls under her own management, exhibiting a beautifully-organized system, with no other bond but *love*; it would delight you to see her, as a young disciple, so consecrated and so blest to young ones like herself.

My writings, my friend, have been produced under a variety of circumstances, many of them in a sick room, many of them in the midnight hours, when being unable to sleep through indisposition, I have gladly left my bed and enjoyed a *far dearer* refreshment in opening my desk and thus holding fellowship with the Lord. Particularly the Canticles were written last winter when I was confined by a weakness in the chest left by inflammation. I need not tell you that I recal such hours with a kind of fond delight, and love the recollection of the sacred stillness around me, and of the sweet open-

ings of the daylight, and of all the internal enjoyments known at that time ?

Thanks be to our dear Lord that He has spoken to your heart by the channel in which mine found so much comfort,—O may we ever meet there ! Many a sigh has been uttered as I dropped my pen, breathing a humble request that Jesus would carry the tribute to the ordained end for which he enabled me to offer it, and as my heart tenderly turns itself upon your dear self as one of those for whom that sigh escaped—how binding are such considerations to affections, such as we feel in the Lord to each other.

The words (in answer to the enquiry) around the device on my first seal are, "Be faithful unto death." I like it as presenting our dear Lord to the eye of faith in His victorious love, and as affording us the exciting pattern also to our victory, for it is a crown of thorns, but a kingly crown ; referring to Rev. ii. 10, "The crown of life." The other seal I also like just in the way in which you have interpreted it ; not that I had observed the difference in the display of the heart, my idea was of the two hearts offered in holy sacrifice ; but sometimes I have meditated upon the lesson, as of Christ's blessed grace taking my heart unto his and so giving it true elevation. In any of these ways such reflections are profitable. I had looked often on the impression on *your* seal, and wondered if it were adopted by yourself, as expressive of the lightness which *love* gives to all which is endured for Him we love ; so we see we have shewed some congenial feeling and likeness of mind unconsciously.

Why do you hesitate in subscribing with equal confidence that we are sisters in the love of Jesus' spirit ? There can have been no other attraction that has brought us into the holy interchange of thought we now

enjoy. We carry within us therefore the testimony of having drank into one spirit, as having been cemented thereby ; and in a little time we shall drop this mortality and realize what is known by such as inherit this one portion—why not then take the sweet joy which flows from a sense of this mighty operation, knowing, as we do, that the joy of our Lord is our strength ! It is our wisdom to cherish whatever may promote this settled assurance. It is a great blessing to possess a sober, regular, and stedfast affiance. This sheds holy peace within, and much discourages the enemy in his attacks. May we be wise, my beloved friend, as Jesus our tender Lord would have us, and take the free affection which He gives.

I am in truth, love, and sympathy, &c., &c.,
M. S.

XCVIII.

Close Communion—Appropriation—Sensibilities—Realizing Communion.

WITH unfailing love I bear you continually in my heart, my dear friend. I am this night detained at Stonefall by my sweet M——'s indisposition ; but as she is rather better this evening, I may be able to give an half-hour to you. Accept it; although it is a small portion, it is full of all you would wish me to feel on your behalf. I trust we are ever together, dwelling in the clefts of the Rock—dear hiding-place ! Here meeting, we are sure of peace, and have a blessed liberty in the Spirit, by which we can triumph over all obstructions to the flow of confidence and love. O my beloved

friend, ever may we have victories such as these, and ever experience unimpeded outgoings of heart to each other.

When I think of the extraordinary manner in which we have been made known to one another, and of the strong attraction which has been given to us, each touched by the magnetic power of the Holy Ghost, my spirit has a kind of affectionate *awe* upon it, and I am reminded that surely by such a spiritual bond the Lord has designed some great thing, and that we are each required correspondently to love and pray for, and administer to each other. For this blessing I supplicate our beloved Lord, and I believe that He hears and will answer the prayer.

I long for some communication from your own hand, telling me how you are in body and mind, and what are your occupations in that place of comparative solitude, where I frequently picture you to myself, enjoying what *naturally* would be my greatest delight—the sweet liberty of spending whole days in close communion with Jesus in heavenly abstraction of soul! Undoubtedly we may in every situation possess the presence of our Lord so as to know Him to be our own Lord. Oh yes! blessed be His name, my beating heart and the tears which spring at this moment to my eyes, are demonstration that there is unspeakable bliss in saying *anywhere*, in any circumstances, and at any time, my *own* Lord! What does it not include, my beloved friend? Surely everything by which the loving or necessitous heart can be supplied. I felt it last night when, after our meeting, we sung the hymn that has in it,

“ Oh this shall check each rising sigh,
That Jesus is for ever nigh !”

Appropriation of Him is then our high privilege; and

having this, we have all things. You and I can speak this language experimentally, and we can bless the Lord that He has, as it were, enriched this experience by making us acquainted with the painfulness of the world.

There is something in sorrow, when sanctified, that gives a power to every part of christian experience ; and the sensibilities of a heart, that has been disciplined, broken and healed by the alone efficient Healer, are rendered thereby precious attendants upon the life of faith. And are we not greatly distinguished by having had a portion given us through which we have obtained lessons most abiding, and to the binding up of every expectation and desire in one blessed object ! O may He ever have the whole current of our strong affections running with unchecked force into His bosom, and all we have to give be His in unconditional devotion ! By this existence we are prepared for whatever may arise. Earth's smiles or frowns, the continuance or withdrawal, or even the painful vicissitude of frames and feelings within our own breast, will not in this case be very heavy weights or dangerously interesting concerns ; for love to Christ will afford us enough on which to rest, or to commune with Him, although possibly sometimes in a mournful strain ! The ear of our Lord is *always* open,—the expression of our feelings is *always* welcome. O precious truth, calculated indeed to awaken within us the desire of using this privilege.

Very sure am I, my own dear friend, that to a heart and mind so painfully susceptible as yours, an abiding rest cannot be known, but in the frequent and realizing communion which our Lord invites us to hold with Him. I think of you with intense and tender solicitude. Probably your occupations will not be of a nature calling you much forth into relative labours. In this case,

my beloved friend, you will have to watch lest they assume too much of mournfulness;—but perhaps I err in my conjecture. In the midst of your present lot it may be that openings of an unexpected kind appear, wherein you may feel impelled to become a worker for others' souls. Ignorant children or villagers may ask your christian zeal; and the Lord may have taken you, that you may there gather together a little flock, and break to them that bread of life on which you feed. It will give me joy should your next letter impart tidings of this description. I think the work would be delightful to yourself, as well as a savour of Jesus to others.

When we examine the developement of true experience, as laid open in the Book of Canticles, it appears that this desire and power of imparting something of Christ to others forms a very principal part of the Spirit's work; of course therefore we may expect a blessing that shall return into our own bosom, when, according to providential openings, we are thus engaged. In these days, also, we have a more than common demand upon our exertions. Is it not lamentable to behold, in many who have occupied high stations in the church, not only a departure from pure doctrine, but a wild enthusiasm. O may we remember his words, and likewise strive to stem this torrent, in whatever form it may arise, by *sound doctrine* and scriptural rule.

I must now shut up my letter, and attend to my sick one. May the divine blessing be at this moment the repast on which your soul is feeding!—and may it ever prove an inexhaustible provision, on which you shall depend, both in time and in eternity! He who gives it loves you, and will ever love you, in His own faithfulness.

M. S.

XCIX.

Rest—Rich Provision—Cup of Bitterness—Loving Expectations—Purse.

IT has caused me some solicitude of mind, my beloved friend, not to have written ere this in reply to your dear letter,—dear to me is every communication that drops from that pen, and with heartfelt love every sentiment it conveys is received and lodged in my soul. Ever will it be thus, my dear companion in the way; and we shall tread together in spirit to the close of these steps of journeying. I did not write directly, because I hoped to be able to place some one of our dear flock in your loved circle and under your influence. A little time was necessary in order to determine this point; and it is no small disappointment to me that I should be obliged to relinquish the hope; and now I write as soon as I have been enabled—rejoicing thus to drop a hasty line of expression of the tenderness and truth with which I love you, and in which I bear you continually where I know you most desire to be borne, even before the mercy-seat. Oh how precious it is, my own friend, to have a dwelling-place on high, and to feel the extent of that loving-kindness which bids us *rest!* How much there is in that little word, when understood as *Jesus* speaks and intends it, and as applied to the interests of a *soul* which, alas! is destitute of rest, save as the covenant has provided the abode of love in *Jesus'* bosom. There indeed the provision is ample, and whatever may arise to agitate or toss the poor destitute thing, there is sufficient of peace in the King's chambers wherewith to hush and compose it again. 'Tis strange that they

who know this rich provision should not always use it: yet so it is, and therefore it comes to pass that many even of the Lord's experienced people have much of spiritual depression and painful sense of want. But even in this the Lord will magnify himself, for hereby He increases dependance, and graciously imparts greater discoveries of the *covenant* strength which keeps us. It is a delightful occupation to *search out* the works of the Lord, whether exhibited in our fellow-sinners' souls or experienced in our own; and yet more delightful to find how, after every scrutiny, we return, like the little bee laden with the sweets that we so gather, and which we are privileged to lay up in our hive. And where is there honey so sweet or so *sweetening* as that which is thus found? Thanks be to God, we have possessed its preciousness, and for every remaining cup of bitterness we have the same provision near.

I received your welcome little packet, so full of the testimony of your valued affection, and I can truly say, my beloved friend, that with it I received a heavenly blessing. On these occasions, it is unquestionable that our Lord does intentionally impart himself to my soul and that my spirit is refreshed. I mention this for the confirmation of our joy and faith, that we may lift up renewed tributes of praise to our souls' Beloved, and be expecting more.

I believe that there is no act which is more acceptable to our Lord than that of *loving expectation*. I know that we have much to bless Him for, in mercies already received; and that we may justly say, He hath exceeded all that we could ask or think; but this is not to straighten us, for every token of love given is but a pledge of what inexhaustible love has yet in store to give. Ever let us bring our hearts, like gasping, parched,

and thirsty ground, to drink the plenteous blessing that the cloud pours forth.

I cannot tell you with what affectionate thoughts my spirit wings its way to you, when I look upon the pretty little purse that is placed on one of your letters on my desk, and which of course continually meets my eye. I know how tenderly and prayerfully *your* thoughts would be with me as you took every loop ; and I estimate *such* love, my friend, in a way that your own heart will best explain. The kind enclosure received a destiny to which I hope the Lord appointed it ; it arrived just at the hour when I was reflecting on the best way of helping a child of God who, by sickness and sorrow, was reduced to much difficulty ; *he* also came in at the time, and had to tell me that having heard that his wife and two children, whom he had left at Leeds, were exceedingly ill, he had resolved to go to them immediately. Some other circumstances were also communicated ; and joyfully I took out the little golden inhabitant of the purse and gave it a humbler home in the poor man's pocket, being quite sure it would be to him as a messenger from the Father of mercies ! There is much gratification to the heart when *due seasons* for our work are in this way opened out by the Lord ; and you will feel with me that this is a precious little attendant upon your offering of love. The poor man's tearful eye spoke much more than words could do, that it had removed a painful pressure from his heart. O how sweet to meet such sorrows, so as in any way to mitigate them ! And how blessed the assurance that in a little while Jesus will come, not to mitigate but to remove all manner of evil, and in His own sway, establish a reign which shall bless creation !

The time is near for going to my school-room. I have for this night 1 Peter v. 7, a *precious* portion to us ; may He who thus enjoins us put energy into our

hearts, and make us do the thing He thus commands.
Why should we groan under a care that Jesus will take?
And let us observe it is "*all your care!*"

Forgive inaccuracies. I write in haste and in the
evening shades. M. S.

C.

*Annual Occupations—Dwelling-place—Legitimate Investigations—Periodicals—
Peace-giving Scriptures—Miracles.*

MY EVER DEAR FRIEND,

WE have not yet closed this year of our pilgrimage, and your desire is to meet me at the opening of another; yet I have taken up my pen, and seem as if *anticipating* our appointment; for this your heart will forgive me, for you well know that it is an act springing out of tenderest fulness in mine towards you. I would not disappoint your expectations; but who can calculate upon what a day may bring forth, especially under circumstances wherein you are the servant of all, and may have a call from some master whom you must obey? Sweet is the thought that in *such many masters* we are following but *One!*

This season, my own dear friend, is more than usually occupied, according to what of course takes place at public periods of this description. It is a time of holiday and of visits from old scholars, &c.; a time also of examination of classes, all which fills up our day very completely. This is the reason why by anticipation I seize upon a moment to hold converse with you. To this mode of communion, however, we are not confined.

Our abode is together *in* the Lord ; and there is an intimacy of fellowship whilst thus situated, which *we*, my beloved friend, have proved too satisfactorily to doubt. These "secret places of the stairs" are pleasant places of rest ; and were we dwelling there alone, there must needs be high gratification sufficient to fill the soul, while looking around with admiring eyes to see how our dwelling-place is studded with all manner of precious stones—with covenant promises, that sparkle to Jehovah's praise, and illumine the region of peace. Yet it is blessed to have a congenial spirit in association with ours, to whom we may express our admiring joy, and from whom to receive exciting returns of thoughts. Such is our privilege,—a pledge, I trust, of future perfected delights. Sweet are your letters to me, coming as they do in order, and as it were to embody these hopes and thoughts, and so to make us realize with increasing energy the nature of the covenant-fellowship we have with each other. It is a means to us, my friend, by which we are carried out of the influence of those winds and storms that blow around us in the wilderness ; and I think we may say that hereby we are carried to our *proper* place, which is an Eden in the midst of the desert—a paradise below. It would be happy for the Lord's people to be found more alive to this privilege. I believe the more habitual possession of such experience would go further to cure the miserable malady that now distresses the church than the most laboured arguments. Let us rest in Jesus *experimentally*, and *of course* we shall practically shew forth *His* mind, and His truth. Satan prevails by an awful subtlety, through pretended zeal, and with vehemence of mind respecting subjects of revelation, and with a heated feverish excitement, which is of a secretly *consuming* character. Alas ! too many seem like what we see in consumptive

habits, quite unconscious of the progress of the evil, whilst bystanders can trace but too plainly the ravages that are made. Let us, my beloved friend, be guarded in this instance, and keep a rein even upon *legitimate* investigations, so as always to have them within check, and such as we can bring before our heavenly Teacher.

I often think that the Lord has dealt graciously with you in appointing a place of residence where you are comparatively out of the scene of contention, and perhaps in the end you will not have reason to regret that you have less of access to periodical works, &c. than you once had. There is use, especially to those who are placed in responsible situations towards others, in knowing what is broached in the religious world. It is one way by which we are made to try the spirits and to prove all things; nevertheless we may fall into excess here, and so become troubled and less attentive to the blessed peace-giving Scriptures. As to myself, I have no opportunity to read such things, except in an occasional way. My brother-in-law is a helper, and gives me just so much of information of what is abroad as he thinks I ought to know; and when it is really a matter involving a foundation-truth, of course it becomes requisite to be aware of the arguments produced by the adversary, that they may be scripturally encountered. I do, however, think that *generally* speaking periodical works are too much read, when they engross so great a proportion of time as with some people, producing an argumentative style of conversation and of thought, which is not favourable to *devotional peace*. Besides, we are not children, to be tossed to and fro; we know whom we have believed, and have been building upon a foundation which we have found to be strong enough for our purpose. * * * * I say no more of the case in question—*Infidelity is awfully CLOAKED!*

Now faith has to act in a more simple expression—to *believe without seeing*; and now we are made responsible to accept and live by an established gospel, to which the Holy Ghost has given His abundant witness and seal. We look to His present dispensation of the kingdom, which is by the secret power of the Holy Ghost accompanying an established gospel, and not by miracles to confirm what is unknown. But mark, my beloved friend, how these pretensions are connected with heresy. It is the party who have gone into fundamental error respecting these wonders. So considered, if there be anything of a supernatural kind in what they boast, are we not justified in apprehending herein that sign of the times of which Jesus speaks (Matt. xxiv. 24.) If we are required to express any opinion upon these passing pretensions (which are but like a rushing blast that passes by, and is gone,) I think we can only conclude that they belong to the delusions of the times, and are efforts of the enemy, who knows he has but a short time, and is gone out with great fury, and that these are the things which will give a handle to enemies. If ever the Lord should see good to work miracles again, we must see some result honourable to Himself, and we must find the *pure connection* of the truth once delivered to the saints with effectual and unquestionable works.

Here, beloved friend of my heart, I will drop my pen. I did not intend to write so much at this moment, for I would leave space to be filled at a nearer close of the year.

M. S.

CI.

Serious and affectionate Counsel to young People.

MY BELOVED FRIENDS,

As it is the Lord's will to lengthen the time of our separation I take this method of speaking to you, that I may assure you no distance divides you from my heart, or lessens the holy solicitude I feel for your establishment in Christ. Ere long I trust I shall be restored to labour amongst you again, and that we shall still experience the faithfulness of our God, smiling upon and acknowledging our fellowship. It appears desirable that I take the present rest, otherwise I should probably be soon unable to continue my work, and I know that you will be willing to forego our usual opportunities a little while under these circumstances. In the meantime, let me urge upon you with earnest affection to improve the present period. There are many profitable reflections that ought to arise; and both you and I should consider how strongly these separations remind us of the uncertainty of all helps and outward means, and of the necessity of living by faith on the Son of God, from whom nothing can separate us. Let me entreat you, beloved friends, to call upon your souls to bring forth the grace of faith into lively exercise, and to endeavour to place before you that dear Redeemer in whose steps you are called to tread, and by whose sacrifice of himself you live. If you are doing this, I need not to have any anxiety about your present state, because we must always derive strength from Him. When we are leaning upon Him—and I trust there are some amongst you who are at this moment

realizing the blessedness of "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in their body,"—to such I have only to say, You know the love and the sufficiency of your Saviour; be strong in Him, and grieve not the Holy Spirit by ever allowing what might depress your joyful experience in Christ.

There are others, probably, who do not rise so high in their souls' experience, and in whom I might have reason to dread that the loss of our usual meetings may prove injurious. Let me beg of you seriously to remember the necessity of being *decided* for Christ. The Lord will not allow of any division of the heart, and a state of lukewarmness clearly proves that there is something which is a rival to God in the heart; look well what it may be, and see if there is any covetous, earthly, creaturely or indolent propensity that is indulged? If so, let it be remembered that spiritual experience will be proportionably low, and that such a state is miserable, both as it respects the condition of the soul and the cause of Christ, which to us, as believers, should be dearer than life. Rise up, then, and shake off the deadly evil, and let the race be run with determination and vigour.

You have had some affecting events and changes in the flock since I was with you, in which you may have read how needful it is to have our house in order, for the Lord cometh at a time and in a way in which we are many times severely and unexpectedly tried. This you must see, particularly in the death of one who was so long a dear member of our flock, and in the severe and painful trial of another, called to pass through much bodily anguish. O think of these things, my beloved friends, as so many voices speaking to you; and be persuaded to cultivate intimacy with Jesus, as the dear-

est Friend of your heart, who only can make the passage through death safe and joyful, and who alone can soothe and support us when afflictions press heavy on the heart.

There is another point to which I would ask you to give reflection ; it is that of improving the privileges with which the Lord distinguishes our place of abode, with humility and constancy. There has been a disposition in some to neglect these things, and in others to attend them with too little consideration of the *end* for which they are appointed. Now, I beseech you, where this is the case, correct the evil ; when *we* meet again, let us do so with *improvement* in our appetite, and with more gratitude for God's long-continued mercy to us. And may he not be moved to put an end to the dispensation of the gospel in K—, by seeing amongst us presumption and negligence ! Let the hearts of those who enter into these things in truth be united in prayer with mine, that the Holy Ghost may descend in rich abundance upon all ; so that our God may look upon us as the precious plants that abound in all fruitfulness, and may we exhibit the greatness of covenant mercy in Christ !

And now farewell for a little while. I trust to be with you very soon. If I am much better I shall only stay two Sundays away ; if otherwise, I think it will be advisable to make it three. Let us meet together in spirit, and pray for one another ; and let love abound. I commend you all to the arms of Jesus, continually bearing you in my heart before him. May He love, and comfort, and strengthen, and keep you all by His own unchangeable purpose, and give us our final home, where there will be no more separation or pain.

Believe me your faithful friend, in Jesus' precious bonds,

M. S.

CII.

Mutual Assistance—Living Water—Hidden Presence—The Race.

. . . OUR communion was very refreshing, and such a re-union after so many years had elapsed has added another rejoicing testimony to the many we have on record of the faithfulness of our Lord, and of the peculiar nature of those bonds by which His children are made one in Him; and in this, as in all our Ebenezers, we will see the name of our Lord—for to Him alone is the glory due for every comfort in His Spirit which we experienced together. It is delightful to meet with one who can rise up to the source from whence all our life and all our enjoyments flow—such fellowship is mutually assistant, and gives new vigour to the eagle-flight we aspire after. We are not straitened in the Spirit; He is full and free in all His divine influence, and it is our privilege to soar on *His* wing, the wing of the Dove, bearing up the soul even to the region within the veil; and surely when so sustained, our spiritual energies, infused and maintained by Him, should bear their suitably fervent and elevated character. It is a help and confirmation to be assisted in this experience, and happy is it for us, my beloved friend, in such a world to receive this aid, which is thus graciously provided. And still happier we may account it, that although the fellowship we have with each other is a privilege, we are not dependant upon any external helps for our spiritual consolations.

This truth is peculiarly precious to one in your circumstances, in a country so desolated by the prevailing darkness, and so scantily furnished with outward means.

Were it not that the living water is within us, the supernatural plants would languish and droop their heads ; but having the inexhaustible well springing up to everlasting life, we are supplied with such streams as fulfil the promise—" Their soul shall be as a watered garden." Let us be like the princes of Israel, and with the energy of faith call upon the hidden well to yield its waters, and in their words—" Spring up, O well !"—assured the Spirit will be faithful, and we shall know the unutterable blessedness of living in, and upon, and by the Lord.

It is not only in such circumstances as yours, however, my beloved friend, that this privilege is specially to be prized,—I feel it so in mine, which, in respect of things outward, would present a different aspect. Amidst the relative duties, and the care for class after class of children, who must be taught, and borne with, and nursed, I find the absolute need of realizing the hidden Presence, else I am exhausted, and my own experience would become either formal or disconsolate ; but by the life of faith, and the habit of turning inward for secret converse with our ever-present Friend, nearness with Him is realized, and the consequent enjoyment. All this shews us how desirable it is to be cast upon our God in simplicity.

Will you speedily write to me—and not only tell me of your dear self, but of your dear sister also, for whom my heart is full of the best kind of sympathy ? We are all hastening to the end of the little space allowed to us ; with some difference, as *we* might calculate, according to the different terms of the years of pilgrimage we have passed ; but the race is not to the swift, in this sense. Oh ! may we be swift of foot in that race which is spiritual, and bounding over every hill of difficulty and through every valley of affliction, find the abun-

dant entrance at last which awaits the victorious in Christ Jesus.

Farewell, my beloved friend. I pray our Lord to overshadow you in all your way. Believe me your faithfully affectionate friend in His precious bonds,

M. S.

CIII.

Juice of Pomegranate—Beauties of Night—A Light of Witness—Little Child.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

THE confidence which christian affection generates in the heart will have preserved your mind, I trust, from hard thoughts of me during the long silence, which has been broken indeed in measure by the *silent* memorials of your remembrance of me received in the *papers*, but which has not been cheered by any interchange of communication in the things which belong to our present experience.

It is now past the midnight hour, and being unable to sleep, I have opened my desk to seek the sweet employment of uttering His praise, who has been magnified by His late mercies, in the midst of much to exercise faith and love. We have had much sickness beneath our roof, but no *wrath* therewith!—thanks be to our covenant God, this bitter is extracted from the cup of trouble put into a believer's hand; and in its place dear and sweetening promises are pressed into it by the hand that presents it to our taste. These are as the juice of the pomegranate, and mingle refreshment with the draught. I am sure I must say so, for the divine

engagement has been truly performed, and the presence of Him, in whose smile is life, has not been withheld. My dear sister has been very ill, Mr. C—— is also very unwell; these have been trials now apparently passing away for a season, and I have not been lately in usual health; perhaps fatigue and colds have contributed to produce what has put me, the last few days, in my own sick room; but these are precious seasons for experience, and although I cannot feel to be renewed in strength for my work amidst others, I consider it a privilege occasionally to be withdrawn from public scenes for the blessed employment of private self-cultivation. We have to dread the confession of the church, "They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept," and, no doubt, as a preventive to this evil the Lord gives out such dispensations from time to time as bring the soul into close contemplations of its own interests—thus, my beloved friend, he fulfils his own character, "I will keep it, I will water it, night and day, every moment, lest any hurt it." Oh what promises are these, spoken by Him who is truth, and whose truth combined with His sympathy gives sure supplies for every hour. May the Spirit help us, give faith with what we hear Him speak, and open to our hearts all the streams of divine consolation that flow from the covenant of our God. This is a sweet night—the moon is giving its mild beam through my window, and a calm has succeeded to the awful winds that blew last night—the face of nature seems to look forth as a teacher of supernatural truths, and I have been thinking upon the calm which Jesus gives when He is pleased to rise in the storm and utter his voice,—and surely we need such reflections in these times of ours, wherein the eye that looks only upon what is external, would, as Jeremiah complains, "affect the heart," and bring forth

sighs ; but we, my friend, have the visible bow in the clouds, and this shall call forth songs.

How is it with you ? I think much of you, and have pictured you to myself sometimes exposed to scenes wherein, perhaps, you have not the flow of christian communion,—but I remember our last conversation upon this point. The Lord has different descriptions of work for his children, appoints us our place, and always along with the place, giving strength and wisdom ; and perhaps where you are, the call to shine amidst comparative darkness may be your gracious lot. The Lord keep you, my dear one, in this responsibility, and make you a blessing to the enquirer, and a light of witness to the unbeliever. It is an arduous path sometimes, but you lean upon the arm of your Beloved, and that arm is omnipotent—the days of your past pilgrimage have abundantly proved this, and you have been taught that we may lean our whole weight upon that arm. Wonderful is the fact, that the more entirely we lean, so much the more we give pleasure to the Lord. I pray for simplicity, and for power to realize the ever-present Lord. Oh let us unite in the prayer, my love, and ask to *feel* how we repose in Him. No doubt this is the way in which we have to improve our time to practical results. When a little child is out in rain and wind, it either hastens home with greater speed, or clings to its parent with stronger hold. May this be our act, my friend ; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord, and tenderly cleaving to Him through the storms which precede his arrival.

Pray when you write tell me of the interests of your dear sister. I conclude that you are yet together, and your mutual converse will be blest to each ; pray offer my most affectionate remembrance : it is superfluous to tell her how unceasingly I remember her, this she already

knows, and truly I have felt the late opportunities we had together, as bringing you both with a remarkable nearness to my heart and prayers—the Lord evermore bless, and give courage, decision, and dependence—then all is well.

Farewell, my precious friend, believe me ever in the dear bonds of Jesus, most affectionately yours,

M. S.

CIV.

*Parties—Schools—Increased Recumbency—Hearts of Saints—Invisible Church
—Nations—Mighty One.*

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I HAVE endeavoured in vain to find your precious letter last received, which I now conclude I must have taken down to —— for the purpose of replying when I was there, and that it is in my desk at that place. I wished to have it before me, that my lines to you might correspond with its communications; but as that is not in my power at present, I will seize this opportunity for uttering something of that blessed experience which we are privileged to know will always correspond with the affections of our hearts, wherein, my beloved friend, there is *one Spirit*.

Do not wonder that I have been long in saluting you thus; you know that my heart abounds in love to you, but I have been particularly situated during the last months, and unable to write as I would have desired. Much illness has been in our house, and I have been in the number so exercised, after a great exertion required

at the close of the old year and opening of the new,—when we have our several parties of the schools for examination, and tea, &c. &c., along with many other meetings belonging to our little societies. In addition to what is usual, we have been opening an Infant School, and organizing some of the other schools afresh. On this occasion we had an interesting sight in the assembling of about one thousand children, gathered from our schools, who were all brought together in the Castle Yard. The day was fine, and the scene altogether heart-affecting, to such as receive the children in Jesus' name.

I was laid up afterwards in a severe attack, ending in cough and hoarseness, and great difficulty in using my voice. I mention all this, that your heart may feel how, although my pen has been laid aside, along with my voice, the season has been one favourable to the highest enjoyments, and in them to the sweet fellowship of the Spirit with those whom we love. Can we not unite with David in saying, "How dear are thy counsels to me, oh Lord :" In whatever way his dispensations are sent, they are always accompanied by his peculiar mercies, which triumph above pain and grief; and great is our blessedness in all affliction, since we fall upon the bosom of our Lord, and oftentimes repose in Him with greater simplicity, when pressed by the weight of sorrow. Whatever produces increased recumbency upon a covenant God, must be amongst covenant blessings. May we ever realize this truth. To be content with all the will of the Lord is a high privilege. We possess it through the nearness of the soul's repose in Him, and in proportion to our fellowship with Him will be our delight in his way. Surely, my friend, we feel the need of such supernatural affections. We live amidst perils, and we have to anticipate their continuance, in these

times especially ; but if the Lord is in the vessel, storms may beat around and threaten its destruction, but we shall be at peace. I am desirous that we should advance in this disposition of soul, not only for our comfort, but for the honour of the Lord. It is only *men's* hearts that should fail through fear,—the hearts of *saints* should be strong and cheerful, knowing in whom they live. It is surprising to the ignorant, when believers are thus lifted up above trouble,—and indeed it is surprising to ourselves. I have lately had much experience of this description ; and out of the fulness of the present feeling, the mouth and pen will speak. We are called to partake with Jesus in tribulation, and are in this way prepared to participate in his joy—to us a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Thank you for the continual messengers you send me, filled with intelligence interesting to us all. It is cheering to behold any ray of light that falls upon the darkness of your dear country. To us the result of the conflict is hidden, so far as national interests are concerned ; but we know that the redeemed from among men (of which that country is richly possessed) will be kept, and victorious ; and in these times we have to keep our eye fixed upon what the Lord is doing *in*, *with*, and *for* his invisible church. As to *nations*, the time of their tribulation is come, and the crimes that have been multiplied against Christ are receiving retribution ; but to individuals the blessing is secured, as they are hidden in the Beloved. I find little comparative rest whilst looking to public affairs, but as I see the going forth of the Mighty One to conquer :—Conquering he is every hour, and the invisible world exhibits to his glory, the daily and momentary honour of his name, in the destructions and the creations of his arm ;—but there is an hour hastening towards us, when visible glory

shall attend his wide-spread reign. Oh may he hasten his coming, and take us to himself.

Present my true Christian love to your dear sister. Farewell, beloved friend,— I am ever yours in the dear bonds of Jesus,

M. S.

CV.

*Fellowship—Singleness of Heart—The Father's large Family—Pressing Claims
—Burdens borne.*

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

As I am at present laid up by a cold, a sweet opportunity is afforded for taking up my pen, which possibly, when I am better, may not quickly occur. You will believe with what readiness I meet the occasion, and how gladly I would now hold communion with your spirit. Not that our fellowship is only to be expressed by pen and ink, He who has written in and upon us with the finger of the living God, so dwells in our hearts as to maintain that mysterious union which He creates, and so also as to give the habitual consciousness of its existence. This is a sweet privilege, my friend, and sweetens pilgrimage —may it ever be ours in the power of the Holy Ghost.

I think you only imagine you sent me your direction, I never received it, and anxiously wished to write to you, but felt I had not any certainty; however, we look on this as an evil *past*, and will be thankful for *present* enjoyments. Our God is very gracious in shedding upon our path, from time to time, the savour of His love, through the affection of our dear friends, and hereby he gives us the pledge of an eternal union—but he will

have the pre-eminence in all things, and by the interruptions which cross our communion with each other, and by the *perpetual uncrossed* presence which He gives from *Himself*—he exercises our simplicity—and makes *Himself* our nearest portion. This is well, my beloved, for He is, and must be, our *all in all*; no doubt this is the great design which the Lord keeps in view in continuing His children so long in this life of probation. He will prepare us for the world wherein we shall all unite in the extatic tribute of adoring wondering love to Him; and make us even here below to taste the sweets of singleness of heart to Him; and how wonderful is the fact that the more we advance in this devotion to our Lord, so much the more do we grow in tenderness of love towards others, especially towards such as are peculiarly one with us in kindred dispositions sanctified to the Lord's service and cross. In this opinion I know that we are entirely agreed, believing that amidst the large family named by the Father, and united in one living Head, there are peculiarities of temper, and spirit, and experience, belonging to a few, which give peculiar holy sensibility to their interchange of heart and mind. Perhaps, my friend, we shall discover this in a high and surprising degree, when the whole company shall appear before God. I like to think so, for surely there is a singular measure of enjoyment here below belonging to this frame of soul, and we may desire its continuance and perfection hereafter above. Little, however, can we conceive of the nature of that final bliss to which we are hastening; it is enough to be assured we shall be ever with the Lord, and that love, and life, and peace will reign *for ever*.

And so you are not satisfied with my arrangement respecting Monday evening? I appreciate the affection which prompts the discontent, and indeed I have had

my surmise that it might not be well for my body; but in faith I have made the trial; hitherto the only inconvenience I find respects my voice, which occasionally has seemed a little hoarse on beginning to speak; but it goes off, and is not to be compared with the evident advantage to those who wish to come. The evenings are much better attended by a proportion of the poorer class, and as it was for them I made the change, it appears to be acknowledged, and upon the whole we all agree to think the present plan the best for the people in general; and if it be so, our God is able to supply all our need out of his riches in grace and glory in Christ Jesus. If the existence of zeal for hearing be a favourable indication of the state of the place, we may judge favourably of the present aspect of religious affairs with us; and this is great mercy, for in every other respect the aspect is gloomy and dark. The trade in our town is in so depressed a state that the poor are almost starving, and the pressing claims for help upon such as can do anything in their behalf is painfully felt in many instances; but it is well, dear love, when the true refuge is sought, amidst the cares that would otherwise be intolerable. Faith in the covenant Lord soothes the afflicted, and gives to the hungry the support of the promise in Is. xxxiii. 16. Thus too the bonds of christian charity are realized and strengthened, and we learn what is meant by bearing each other's burdens. There is one too who bears the whole weight, on whose Almighty shoulder the government rests, and who must needs be able and willing to hold up whatever is placed thereon. Oh for a *lively faith* in this great truth, that in every present or anticipated sorrow we may know an ample provision in the Lord.

Have you had the happiness you anticipated in a visit from the R—s, they are very dear to us; his delicate

health must be indeed a heavy trial to all the three sufferers—his valuable life and his domestic excellence combine to endear him ; but thus it is, my love, with all that is earthly, our dearest possessions are frail, and though the shadow be sweet, it is but a gourd. May we be sitting beneath our apple-tree, where no worm can intrude, and the fruit will ever be sweet to our taste.

God bless you, my beloved friend, for ever ; believe me, in Jesus' dearest bonds your ever affectionate friend,

M. S.

CVI.

Delights of Retirement—Sanctified Solitude—Inestimable Scripture Passage—Near Retreat—United Prayer.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I OPENED my desk this morning with the fulness of heart which would give you its affectionate greeting, and I find all my letter-paper gone. What shall I do ? —close my desk again ? I answer No !—my friend will prefer the communication in any way before silence, and I therefore bring out this homely sheet. How very long it is, my friend, since we communed thus ; I feel it so, for I have borne you in my heart with many affectionate and prayerful recollections. Circumstances have prevented my writing—but, in consequence, such an accumulation of work in the place, as has been too pressing to admit of my using the pen.

Your letter was very precious to me, and your little note also, sent through Miss M——, both serving to relieve my mind of anxiety respecting you. And now you are seated once again in the comparative quiet of

home. I think I see you enjoying the delights of such devotional exercises as belong more especially to retirement,—the words of Cowper are very descriptive of what we realize on such occasions—“The calm retreat, the silent shade, with prayer and praise agree.” And to us who are in the loved association of our souls with Jesus, they are frequently the hallowed scenes where we know, in dearest experience, what the church declares—“My beloved is mine, and I am his.” Jesus himself, rising up a great while before it was day, departed into a solitary place and there prayed. Solitude is sanctified by this act, and by and in Him is made a sacred region to us. Perhaps it might surprise you, were I to say that this is the kind of life my natural taste prefers. I am filled with admiration of the Lord’s dispensations respecting me, on this account, that what I never should have chosen for myself he has so decidedly appointed for me, taking me out of those natural preferences, and putting me into a situation where little of solitude can be possessed.

In these ways of our Lord, my dearest friend, we see infinite wisdom and infinite power; for hereby we are made acquainted with self-denial, and with that sufficiency of the promise and presence of the Lord, by which any and every situation can give the soul its spiritual enjoyments. O may we together know and feel that our heaven is Jesus’ smile, and our sufficiency Jesus’ strength, and then we shall be prepared for any external changes. In these times we have especial need to be living thus upon the indwelling presence of the Lord, else the conflicting passions of men and the affecting agitations of the visible church on which we look, might carry us into unbelieving agitations; for even our faith and our love might dispose us to fall in with the tide by which men are borne into discussions

and disputes that carry away the mind from those recollections wherein alone we can feel at anchor: "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." This little passage is of inestimable value to us in public discussions and in private converse; serving to temper our heart when we would contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to keep us mindful that our weapons must not be carnal. All this, my beloved friend, I believe to be attained *through* the maintaining of close communion with our Lord, which not only draws forth his promised Spirit, but provides a near retreat, into which we can run, when matters are beginning to assume an unhallowed aspect. . . . I have changed my week-day meeting from Thursday into Monday, by the desire of our poor. They are at present in a very depressed state respecting work, and Monday is to them without employment,—this affords them opportunity to attend; and although it is not desirable to have it so speedily after Sunday, on some accounts, it is better to be so for them. I mention this change because I like you to be with us in spirit, and your prayer for the Spirit's blessing will go up for us. It is pleasing to the Lord that we should thus maintain our fellowship; he has put a particular honour upon united prayer, and bid us use it, with an assurance that if two of us shall agree as touching anything that we shall ask, it shall be done. Wherefore hath He thus attached such importance to these agreements, but that He may shew us how He delights in the unity of His people and in their expression of sympathy with each other. He has himself wrought this between, and in us, in an especial degree,—O may we ever evince it to His praise. May all blessings out of the riches of Christ enrich you, and

banish all spiritual poverty for ever from your soul. I ask it earnestly for you, my own beloved friend, and I trust the prayer is heard.

Believe me ever yours, in dearest ties,

M. S.

I beg my Christian salutation to those dear to you.

CVII.

Division of Labour—Memorials of Redeeming Love—Martyrs—Saints—Heavenly Jerusalem.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

How truly I enter into all you communicate to me of experience and of interest in the Lord's service. It is evident that you have your own special callings, in respect of the work for the Lord, and it belongs to the life of faith to be glad in the Lord; in whatever direction we observe His appointments. Much is done by a *wise division* of labour,—this we know in all human affairs—and in the distributions of spiritual services it is not less so. The salvation or the edification of *one* soul is of vast consequence; our Lord's *rest at the well* gives proof of this, as also Philip's course through the desert. How lovely were the flowers gathered in those solitary regions, now blooming in the Eden above, and shedding a fragrance through heaven which everlastingly proclaims Jesus' name. Let us never undervalue like acts of grace, wrought through the instrumentality of any testimony we may have grace to deliver.

What a privilege is extended to us, my beloved friend, when on any occasion we see the last triumph

of the pilgrim, and behold in the victory of the soul over death what Jesus works for his own. Many times this privilege has been mine, and last Tuesday one of these memorials of redeeming love was presented, in a dear girl, aged nineteen, who was one of the Stonefall scholars. She had been in a lingering consumption the last year, but now sleeps in Jesus, free from bodily maladies, and happy in Him. ‘The sting of death,’ she said, ‘is wholly taken away; oh what a proof I am of the doctrine of electing love. Why was I turned away from the path of sin, which my former companions still tread? Why was I constrained to join the flock?’ She had not been accustomed to *talk* much, being a silent, quiet girl; but now, in the last days of her dwelling here, her mouth was opened, and it was refreshing to listen to the *experimental* utterance of truth, in such circumstances as hers, and into which, my beloved friend, we also shall shortly enter, I trust, to give a further witness to the power of Jesus’ cross and grave.

In answer to the question respecting the individuals privileged to reign in Millennium glory—if it were the martyrs alone? (Rev. xx. 4,) I have to say that it is my opinion the distinction is given to all the departed saints, along with some who shall, at the coming of the Lord, “be changed in a moment,” &c. *Martyrs*, such as have yielded up their bodies to death, do indeed occupy a place by *name* in the testimony; but I conclude that we do not give to these, *merely on account* of having been killed for the name of Jesus, this great distinction. This would be to put too much honour upon a *single circumstance* of confession; whereas many who have not been so exposed, may possess a yet more abundant life of suffering and devotional love. We also read that *all the saints* shall come; (Zech.

xiv. 5.) that the *dead in Christ* rise first. (1 Thess. iv. 14—17.) Comfort is proposed to believers on the ground that their departed friends shall come, even all who sleep in Jesus. (See the 13th and 14th verses.) The whole church is described as thus assured. (See Rom. viii. 23. Eph. i. 13, 14.) These, with many other passages of scripture, serve to satisfy my mind upon the subject, filling me with the blessed expectation that when Jesus returns, his whole family, of the souls already liberated from the body, and a remnant composed of those that *look for Him*, will be possessed of their perfected being in the re-union of soul and body, and form the heavenly Jerusalem which St. John beheld. (Rev. xxi. 2.) It is indeed to be lamented, my dear friend, that so many of those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus should remain under the influence of prejudice against this glorious doctrine, so honorable to Christ and so animating to the church. Thus far Satan has prevailed to throw a veil over the mind, and through the abuses of the doctrine, by which men of speculative minds have mixed up fancy with truth, and blended the revelation with human imaginations—the truth itself is rendered an object of fear and suspicion. Alas! it is a grievous thing when professors lose the sobriety of a dependant and simple mind. Let us be *prayerfully on our guard*. And now farewell, my friend. I am ever yours, in the dearest bonds of Christ,

M. S.

CVIII.

Faith in action—Breathings after Holiness—Intercourse with the Lord—The preferable Subject.

MY BELOVED YOUNG FRIEND,

I OFFER my praises to our gracious Lord for that loving-kindness which watched over you in all your way, and which I trust does still overshadow you with richest demonstration of His presence, in whose smiles there is life—in whose assurance of love there is joy! Ever, my beloved girl, cherish the holy nearness of your soul to Him. We lack no good thing when He is our portion; and whatever may be our outward circumstances, there will be an inward heaven when Jesus reigns upon the throne of our heart, and sheds the blessed light of His countenance forth upon the inner man. It is in proportion to the degree in which we are thus in fellowship with our soul's Beloved, that we have either holiness or happiness; and although the Lord's impartations to us are all free, and out of a covenant love that is inexhaustible and plenteous to his children; we know that He requires we should *draw* from that fulness, and that faith should be in action to seek, to take, and to use the privileges that are treasured up for us in our Covenant Head. We have very powerful evidences of this in the experience of our own souls, finding continually, that if we relax in our vigilance, or in any degree turn aside from the prescribed paths, or sink below the high region in which, as *saints*, we should live, the proportion of our spiritual delight is lessened; whilst on the contrary, when we are walking in lowly, yet loving association with Jesus, *our* spirit is imbued

by his, and our souls are maintained in the *stability* of his kingdom! Let this witness given to us in mercy be directive and quickening, and let us *rest* in His arms who opens them wide as our home, and *in* them will communicate all that our souls can desire.

It is a joy to my spirit when I read in your letter the fervent breathings after holiness which are uttered there;—the Lord, the indwelling Spirit, does, I trust, awaken these desires, and He it is who will likewise gratify them. We are called to glorify Him of whom the Spirit testifies; and when, in accordance with this divine requirement, God gives into the soul the love that aspires after the attainment of obedience, we may believe that we shall be enabled to reach the heights where we long to be.

You ask me, my love, to repeat to you how you may best attain to conformity of mind to that of Christ? How can I so well answer as by saying, Be constant in *intercourse* with Him! It is said of our final state of perfection, “We shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as he is.” The vision of the Lord is here assigned as the reason of our close conformity; and it must be so likewise here in our condition as disciples on earth. *Our* beauty is but as it were the reflection of his, as the Moon obtains her light from the Sun proportionally as she is brought immediately under its rays;—and yet there is more than this idea seems to convey, for our light and beauty is *internal*, and essentially belonging to the new creation within us; so that we must look for our light to shine forth from the indwelling presence of our God. If it be such a light, we shall glorify Him in the earth. Truly then, my dear love, *all* our desires may be satisfied in this one direction,—keep close to Him in *intimacy* of inward fellowship. For this purpose, I hope you are endeavouring to secure private

opportunities, and are faithful to your appointments with the Lord. We think much of the necessity of keeping any engagement we have made with a fellow-creature,—how much more should we be solicitous to maintain those we make with our Lord! Yet if unavoidably interrupted in our regular course, we still possess the privilege of ejaculatory prayer and praise, which indeed should never be neglected; for it is by these little bursts of feeling and appeal to our Lord, that much of the heart is expressed to Him, and much of the sweetness of the heavenly life is realized.

There is another little passage in your letter which may afford instruction. You say, in reference to the affectionate expression of mutual feeling for me, which attended my note to my dear Mrs. ——, “It is sweet to speak of those we love.” I agree with you, my beloved girl, and I am affectionately grateful that you each felt it so in this instance. Let us take up this sentence as a comparison, and direct it to Jesus as its object. It will often perhaps help us in our endeavour in reference to Him to say, “It is sweet to talk of one we love!” O it is sweet to speak of Him! The bride is described as having lips like a line of scarlet; so ours should be impregnated with Jesus’ blood, as the theme on which we dwell. Our lips should drop as bees are said to do with honey as from the honeycomb; and surely if the blessings of the covenant have yielded their store of sweets into our hearts, we shall out of this abundance so speak! I beseech the Lord that this holy communion may take place of the trifling vanities, and the mere discussions, which too often engage the tongue and lips of the professed disciple, and that we may all delight ourselves more simply and entirely in Christ.

M. S.

CIX.

*Bite of a Dog.***MY BELOVED FRIEND,**

I PREFER to write rather than allow another. I know that the sight of M.'s handwriting, instead of mine, would suggest numberless alarms to your dear affectionate heart. A few lines must content us both at present. I *have been* ill, as you heard; but from that indisposition am quite recovered. My present ailment is a *right* hand bound up, and in poultice day and night, except as I have put it off to dress at this time. I was bit *by a dog* through the thick part of my hand; and exertion, and being heated in my meeting next night, has rendered it inflamed. It requires complete rest, and keeping myself cool, and low by medicines; but I doubt not it will soon now be better: it prevented my obeying my heart's love to you in writing. I feel the movement of my thumb painful; it opens the wound. I will write no more, as I am forbidden, but to say how dearly I love you. How precious my Lord and your Lord is to my soul at this moment; how unutterably blessed his peace!

Farewell, beloved friend. Let me hear. Ever yours,
M. S.

Note by Editor.

The incident to which allusion is made in this letter occurred as follows:—The dog was an extremely beautiful little terrier, of passionate temperament, the gift of a beloved friend. We were all fond of the little creature, but it attached itself, as most other things did, principally to my sister, whose notice it had enjoyed without

a rival for some months, until we purchased a large mastiff dog for the protection of the premises. This was considered an unwelcome intrusion by the little one, and he presumed to show his indignation by many aggravating actions, which, however, were passed over by the mastiff with indifference ; but whenever he took his place near my sister the little animal was enraged, or when she patted him on the head he would fly from her to a distance, and turn again as if to rebuke her. At last he left our country residence, the home where he was accustomed to see the large dog, and returned only at those hours when he knew he should be alone with us. But one day, hearing the mastiff coming up a back stair near my sister's room, and the door being opened to receive the servant, the little terrier flew out upon the mastiff with indescribable fury. The attack was so sudden on the narrow stairs, that the large dog seized him by the middle of the back in his strong jaw, and held him up in his gripe, struggling with pain, but with unsubdued rage.

My sister rushed to save the dog, but when she approached he resented it, for her endeavour for his liberation was through soothing the mastiff, to induce him to let go his hold : this purpose seemed to be misconceived by the little creature, and now he sought to revenge himself on her, and suddenly seizing her hand, he bit it through the thick part of the thumb. It was very early in the morning ; she persevered in her endeavour, till the extraordinary noise called us to her assistance. Our efforts, too, were useless, until we got two men to choke the mastiff, so as to oblige him to open his jaw, and so release the captive. It was really an alarming wound, and very serious in its effects.

In this, as in other things, she showed her benevolence strongly in her attempt to rescue the little animal,

and in her complacent pardon of the offender. How discomposed and angry some people would have been by such an incident, and prompt to chastise the offender ; but though the hand was extremely painful and bleeding, all her care was that the animals should be saved from each other, for the release had not in the least produced a better disposition in the little dog.

She made spiritual inferences from the occurrence, and considered the conduct of the terrier a representation of the sinner's folly, which ventures on great dangers, and refuses the helping hand.

CX.

Reflections arising out of the Incident—Service of Liberty.

KNOWING as I do, my beloved friend, the affectionate solicitude with which you will think of me as a sufferer, I hasten to remove the painful feeling before I receive your expected reply to my few ill-written lines. At this moment also I write with some difficulty, and not without pain ; but as the danger seems past, I will not withhold a communication which I know will raise your heart with an offering of love to the great physician ! At one time the inflammation ran so high and the appearance of my hand was so dark and discoloured, that I believe my sister looked upon it with some anxiety ; but constant fomentations were blessed by the Lord, and it seems He will lend me this useful little member awhile longer. O may it be increasingly consecrated to serve Him ; and every kind of visitation that comes either as permitted or as immediately commissioned, be accepted with a heart that loves His will !

Many sweet and profitable thoughts have attended this season ; my own little act towards the helpless animal reminded me of David who delivered the lamb from the lion and the bear ; and no wonder that the true David, our own blessed shepherd, was brought to remembrance. On this therefore, my friend, the thoughts of a rescued sinner may find a rich abundance on which to feed, and the eternal Comforter sweetly conducted me into the sight of redeeming love, so actively, so triumphantly, so perseveringly, and with so much expense of personal suffering, apprehending my poor soul and bringing it out of cruel captivity. Our estimate of Jesus' love when it is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, serves to endear every subject by which this truth is brought home to the heart. And you, my ever dear friend, can fully enter into the nature of that sacred retirement of soul which has thus been mercifully enjoyed under present endurance. O how unspeakably precious is our Lord and Master, by whom even things most adverse and contrary to natural desire are sanctified, and made to minister to us as messengers from heaven. I have no doubt that it is in this way the Lord is carrying on His work of love and power, so as to elevate us into a life of faith, such as realizes the presence of the Lord in every moment of our existence. It is comparatively not difficult to place Him before us on grand occasions, or as a result of many reflections ; but this is not enough for creatures who from their estrangement are made *heirs of God* ; and since we inherit the eternal Jehovah as our birthright in Jesus, it is suitable that we should understand the nature of our final heritage by present experience. It is to this we are called ; and never, my own dear friend, let us live below our calling, each moment of our journey towards home let us labour to possess the consciousness of rising higher and higher,

until exercises of faith shall be lost in fruition, and we shall enter the fulness of the Divine Presence as manifested above. And surely it is altogether our interest thus to live ; a lower standard does not correspond with the encouragement proclaimed by the Lord, and cannot answer to the necessity and appetite properly belonging to the new creature. This is evident from the dissatisfaction which many of God's children suffer in the house of their pilgrimage ; arising out of a course which is below the mark exhibited to the eye of faith. It is true, indeed, that there are seasons of pain and discomposure known by the most advanced whilst in a state of conflict here below ; but even these seasons are eventually helps to higher spirituality, by causing us to groan more sincerely under the weight of the body of death, and to make the more ardent efforts to wing the way yet nearer to the world above.

Is it not so, my friend, when the true light is developed ? and shall we not ever enjoin on our souls to be pressing to this stature ! I find, my beloved friend, that increasing views of the glory belonging to our Lord in His person and offices to His people produce this result. Is it not thus with you ? do we not grow in the exercise of expectation ? and when looking into the unsearchable fulness that is in Christ, do we not find our souls emboldened to ask and look for measures of grace and power, which shall overflow in the blessed cup of salvation of which we drink ? How important then is it that we strive to look stedfastly unto Jesus, and that leaving off the habit of poring over the unprofitableness of our old man, we learn to look to the beauty of the new man, as created after the image of its author, and as nurtured and matured by the fostering grace that proceeds from our living head ! I would not be understood as meaning that we should never look upon or

bewail the misery of our marred and fallen condition; this is profitable when profitably regulated; but in many instances it is attended with feelings which obscure the lustre of the cross, and depress the energies of love and hope. These blessed graces are favourable to holiness, and aid the soul in its entrance upon a service of liberty and joy in the Lord. And certainly there is no sanctification reaching so high a degree and quality as that which is richly imbued with a sense of personal interest in all the riches of redemption. This seems to be the nature of the argument of the Apostle in Heb. v. 12—14, vi. 1—3.

How I long to have a letter from you, my beloved friend; perhaps you thought me long in writing; I thought so too; but my hours are exceedingly filled, and not unfrequently some unexpected increase of occupation has occurred, preventing the accomplishment of what I had arranged. But you have a charge, you know, to which you consented, not to wait my regular replies, but to write frequently, knowing that I am never too busy to have a heart that stands open to receive all you would lodge within it. Now I cannot suppose that for the last few months you have had nothing in yours which would have given itself to mine, therefore I began to wonder my eyes did not greet a direction written by your hand. I think, however, my last will bring me a messenger, and most tenderly shall I hail it, for I know it will speak to me in words such as my soul loveth.

I have written, perhaps, more than I ought to have done at once; my hand is very uncomfortable if I hold my pen long, and I am bid not to do it yet: I therefore once more say farewell, my ever-loved and valued friend; feeling also that in the spirit we shall hold communion, residing as we do in that one bosom, the seat of

love and of our peace, where we are ever held by the “everlasting arms.” Give my love, my affectionate love to your precious circle; and remember me all of you, my friends, before our dear Lord, as I do you.

I am your tenderly affectionate friend and sister in the sacred bond,

M. S.

CXI.

Various Points—New Church—Eternal Purposes—Work of Love—State of the Flock.

IT has been a subject of regret to me, my dear christian friend, that I have been so long silent to you, believe me this has not been because I love you not—God doth know. In the bonds of Jesus, I trust, we met, and in them, as increasingly realized, we parted; and I have not ceased to bear you in affectionate remembrance. I do not like to speak of engagements as preventing me, the excuse is common; and the existence of so many claims, as have been multiplied upon me during the last months, could scarcely be understood, were I to relate them. Accept then, I beg you, my assurance that nothing would have hindered this expression of sympathy but unavoidable occupations with the sick in the house and the work out of it.

I travelled with you along the tedious lane back to K—— in my spirit, with my prayers, and when you were gone out of sight I began to be very uneasy. You were very tired, and it would have been more prudent and wise had we proceeded, and provided for your return by a carriage. I had a pain in my heart when this thought occurred to me, and it was too late to put it into practice; however, I trust, no lasting

evil ensued, and thus I comfort myself, whilst I also take blame for having been so slow to recollect this.

It is very good in you to have sent me the history of your progress on the way home, and of the after-improvement in the dear invalid, to whom I pray that the perfect restoration of mind and body may have been granted. Her's was a very interesting and affecting case. Distress of mind, in any case, awakens sympathy, but when it is connected with religious subjects it has a peculiar character that calls for more than ordinary tenderness. The Lord raised up for her your nursing affection and care, and I doubt not prepared the way, by the temporary retreat with you, for the after improvement; shewing us also, that although the use of means is enjoined, the healing *act* is the Lord's alone. We know this in the experience of our own hearts, for none could have introduced the balm of the covenant into our bosoms but Christ himself; and now in the various circumstances of trial which we meet, we feel it is only by the hand and voice of the Saviour that support and consolation are imparted to the inward man. All this, dear friend, is according to the loving method of grace, for it is our happiness to be thrown upon the bosom of Christ for all, and it is our privilege to be rendered simple and single in mind and heart. By this rule, we may interpret many of those seasons of painful exercise through which we pass, knowing that the creaturely dependence and the inordinate expectations to which we are prone, must be reduced, even as the dross must be separated from the true gold. * * *

These moments of painful separation are to be numbered among the trials of our pilgrimage, and we all feel it much, not only in nature but in spirit, when we lose a faithful and accepted worker from our own vineyard; but in all things, my friend, we are privileged to

find a covenant-blessing, and I trust, as God's children, we shall seek His blessing, as the antidote to every evil, and our sufficient portion. Our God has his instruments for His work in the whole earth, and it is enough for us to know that He appoints what they are to do. I hope your own solicitude about a fit minister for the new church has been graciously relieved by a suitable person, and that you may be rejoicing in the prospect of having the desires of your heart answered in the rising up of pleasant plants, of the Lord's right-hand planting, in the spot where this well is opened. In the present day it is a subject of peculiar importance; the abounding of error quickens our holy jealousy, and makes us alive to the sacred injunction to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; and, of course, my dear friend, we desire to see every keeper of the walls animated by the true spirit of a watchman. May the Holy Ghost raise up such advocates for truth, and cast down the high battlements of the enemy's kingdom. This he will do, for truth shall prevail. This is our strong consolation; for "if the foundations be removed what can the righteous do?" but these, standing eternally in the counsels of a covenant God, the righteous must stand, and they may rejoice in their secure and firmly upholding rock of salvation. Let us never be disquieted, the Lord reigneth, and however dark the clouds may be that overhang our nation, or any of our interests, we never should forget the radiant bow! The Lord has said, "*I will look upon it,*" how intently should *we* look, and remember the everlasting salvation! Thus I try to cheer my own soul and realize the promise, (Ps. xci. 1.) and to this I would affectionately seek to animate all my beloved companions in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

* * * *

loves to reduce the heart to His feet, that it is prepared to appreciate the tokens of tenderness extended from such as know what it is to love *for Jesus' sake*. Do not, then, my dearest friend, grieve yourself or me by one misgiving as to our communication.

I thank you from my heart for every line of yours, and have lodged every expression in my bosom as a new testimony of union.

Thus you will read my heart as I do yours, and we will bring them both to Jesus to be read, and shall receive renewed unction to rest in every feeling there.

Could we but entirely believe this, how sweet would be our journey home. There is no bitter in it, my friend, but as nature desponds, and despondency surely could not long survive the beam of Jesus' eye. O were we ever realizing His works of sympathy, power, and unchangeableness, our consolation would abundantly rise, and sadness or fear be little known! I say not that *sorrows* would not be known, for exercises of this discipline are necessary, and are *privileges*; but sorrow is not necessarily divided from peace, the mysterious existence of a believer being wondrously composed of both. And do we not experience, that in dispensations of this kind the Lord conceals some of His best gifts, and introduces us then into the present enjoyment of what the soul is capable. So likewise, my beloved friend, we are prepared to resist many a danger that attends the pilgrim in this world of evil: we learn to delight *ourselves in the Lord*, and by this simplicity escape those perilous things which are ever busily thronging the pathway of life, and would reach us even when walking in the highway of the Lord. Surely we may apply this observation to the evils of this day. But it serves to show us the necessity of keeping close to the word, and of seeking the sobriety of faith, for

the government of ardent affections. Who can say to what extremity of error the wildness of the human mind may be driven, when once it is induced to relinquish the scripture standard, or to make it subservient to its own heated interpretation; or when every spark or flash of light, passing the heart or imagination, is immediately accepted as divine? Alas! such are in danger of walking in the sparks of their *own* kindling, and of being found to lie down in sorrow! O let us keep near the Shepherd, and lean wholly upon Him, and shut out as much as possible the busy din and confused noise that distracts the professing church, and drowns the still small voice of the Spirit. Never, my beloved friend, can we be sufficiently thankful for being impressed with the need of cultivating this sweet hidden life, and that God has so ordered the *circumstances* of our way as to keep us from the evil. May He have from us the tribute of a grateful heart. Farewell, my loved sweet companion. I drop my pen by constraint, for my time is gone.

M. S.

CXIII.

Gratitude for energy of Body and cheerfulness of Mind.

I HAVE left a half letter at Knaresborough, my beloved friend; but as I am awaiting a call from a person who is beyond appointment, I think I cannot do better than seize the moments ere they are gone, just to send you a few lines,—they will convey to you love, tenderest love, if they speak faithfully. * * * I am very, very busy; various duties press on every side; and this

is the reason why I have not been able to finish that half letter I have spoken of—day and night I am occupied.

O how grateful ought I to be for that energy of body which the Lord is pleased to impart, along with a cheerfulness of mind, which is indeed the special gift according to the day of need.

I do not scruple to send my ill-written hasty lines; I know they will be more welcome than from the pen of a substitute, and will better convey to you our exact circumstances,—*in the Lord* abounding in blessedness; in things of nature *tried*—but all is well!

Bear us on and in your bosom of prayerful love, my own dear friend—there and in that spirit I carry you. I cannot take time to enter upon other subjects. The Lord be praised for mercies to you and yours.

M. S.

CXIV.

Mixed Cup—Providential Aid—Subjects—Servants—Brethren—Singing—Attention to Boys.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

It is always well to seize passing moments for such blessed exercises as belong to the soul's delights; and such are they which I spend thus in communion with my kindred spirit. I may not have a long time thus afforded me this evening; but be it long or short, my heart gives it to you with a full persuasion that you will welcome my greeting. It is very pleasant thus to cheer each other in the wilderness, and very joyous to believe that ere long the Eden of final rest will be ours.

O may we have an abundant entrance, and with all our perfected powers join in the highest anthems of praise Each day and hour we live affords us increased subjects for this final work ; for our cup is continually replenished and made to overflow. It is very true that sometimes we taste a bitter in the mixture ; but then it is so accompanied with sweetness, in the love and presence of Jesus, as to make all acceptable ; and even the mixture of painfulness will prove to be the *preferable* lot.

I should have written sooner in reply to your first letter, but I have had an attention to give in domestic scenes, which left me no time. The sickness of our beloved Mr. C—— and the presence of a medical friend under our roof, from whom we not only gratefully received the Lord's provision of help to our invalid, but of help to our sick in the parish also. The arrival of our friend Dr. R—— was one of the merciful Providences which abound to us. We were in the act of putting on leeches for relief to the high inflammation from the foot to the knee, when he entered the house, after having left us to suppose he could not come down to see us this year. At this critical hour he was sent—and putting us aside, immediately took out a lancet and opened a vein in three places in the foot, and followed up his affectionate and skilful care ten days and nights—being evidently the instrument, if not of preserving life, certainly of relieving from prolonged sufferings. This is not the first time the Lord has used the same instrument in a similar way. Three years since, when I was in such a doubtful state from the inflammation of my lungs, he heard of it by report, and instantly set off from London, and arrived at my bedside to administer to me. Thus the Lord is pleased to work ! Our poor people have received much blessing

by his advice ; particularly two dear ones who have suffered many years from a complaint of the heart, and are now almost entirely well.

* * * * *

I have just begun the Epistle of Jude, for the Sunday evenings, taking last week the words—"Jude the servant of Christ and brother of James." Much is afforded for the exercise of believing affection in these few words ; and I know, my precious friend, that your heart will gratefully glow with mine, whilst realizing as we do, that no titles of distinction are to be compared in our judgment with the blessed one—"Servant of Jesus!"—and no bonds of fellowship so dear as those by which we call the Lord's "redeemed" brethren !

How joyful it is to remember that it is written—"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"—and that the Lord has assured us if we are His servants here, there above, in the mansions of glory, shall we be with Him we serve : "Where I am, there shall also my servant be!"

Our Monday evening subjects have led us to the 7th chapter of Isaiah, in which, if we live to meet, we shall be next engaged on verses 14 to 16.

We *sing* such melodies as are selected by ourselves, excepting in a few instances of tunes recommended by the organist. We endeavour to unite the plaintive and the joyful strains, with a view to meet the varying experience of different souls in the congregation ; and about once a quarter, and on any particular day, we have anthems—some of them very excellent, particularly one on the Lord's prayer. We have *many* voices and many *hearts* in this delightful part of worship. They are all voluntary singers, excepting eight men, who receive an acknowledgment, on account of the need that they should spare one evening in the week

for practising. We have about eighty who attend the practising, besides men who are not regular singers. This makes our singing full; and we divide them into four different parts. It is a great engagement, as we teach many of them by note, and have much music to *write*; but such domestic kind of association is beneficial, and we find these things amongst the helps in the general work.

Your tender solicitude for this tabernacle of mine, my beloved, I ought not to fail in answering. At the time I gave up my second open evening my health *had* much to do with the arrangement. I was not equal to the exertion without great consequent debility. I think, had it not been for this, no alteration would have taken place; but after the change, I had reason to think the Lord had directed it. Certainly I could have continued both meetings, so far as strength was concerned, had I not added the work of more particular attention to the boys. *Both* I could not do, and the latter is the most important, particularly in this day of peril. Thus I answer you, my beloved friend, and can also say that I do not fail in my general vigour of body. The Lord upholds me wonderfully, and my pleasant work is such a refreshment to the spirit, that my house of clay seems many times energized thereby. So it will be, until work is either done, or its character changed by the master, and in this we may quietly repose. O how great is our privilege, thus to be satisfied with what to-day affords, and to be assured that to-morrow will find us encompassed by the same everlasting Arms!

May our Jesus ever overshadow us in all, and fill us out of His own abundant grace and love!

My faithful affection with your dear ones. I am ever yours in Jesus' love,

M. S.

CXV.

To Two young Disciples, on a Change of Circumstances and Situation—Counsel for the Life of Faith—Relative Influence.

I AM very much rejoiced, my beloved friends, that this opportunity is afforded for sending a little messenger, by which I may tell you how my thoughts and prayers are with you in the new scene of engagement in which the Lord has been pleased to place you; in every respect there is much to interest us, both as it respects the internal experience of your own hearts and the external influence which by this means may be given in your Christian course. As to your prospects, my dear —, I trust they will soon resume their usual brightness, and that we shall have you once more in the midst of our little circle; but to you, my dear —, there remains much of new importance, and perhaps too of experimental trial, which will require the special communication of heavenly wisdom, and the frequency of private visits from the Lord. During the time in which you are together, the sweet bonds of Jesus' grace will comfort you both in holy communion; but when the appointed period arrives in which you will be separated for a time, there will, no doubt, be much to exercise faith and hope. May our own eternal Lord ever watch over you both, in the purpose of everlasting grace, and keep you as the apple of his eye.

It is a blessed privilege to be able to realize the leadings of our Shepherd in all the pathway which we tread in this wilderness-world—it sweetens every trial and sanctifies every situation, and, I often think, if only we are enabled to say—My Saviour placed me here,—that

then we are possessed of a spring of sure repose. He cannot bid us move without accompanying us with the pillar and the cloud, nor is it possible that he can ever bring us into circumstances which shall be destitute of communicated strength. We should do well to remember that Christ has said, “No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel.” So we cannot suppose that our Christian life was given merely to serve some private use of our own, or to be concealed from the observation and knowledge of others; the graces we have, must be *proved*; and most probably the Lord has ordained all this dispensation for this end. I dare say you see it to be thus. In your beloved mother it is evident that grace and love are in the deprivation, for she feels her rest in Christ whilst severed from her children, and is sweetly trying her submission of heart to what is painful to nature. And in you, my dearest M——, I hope will be fulfilled that precious passage which we spoke of when you were last here—“I will allure thee into the wilderness, and there I will speak comfortably unto thee.”

The loss of the outward means has not been induced by any neglect of your own, and therefore a faithful God will not suffer you to be injured thereby; only let it be your part to use the appointed channels by which the blessing is promised. Private prayer and reading the scriptures will be sweet enjoyments to your soul, and perhaps you will have more of the secret repast, by reason of the retirement which surrounds you: it is usually favourable to heavenly-mindedness to be thus secluded, and often leads out the spirit into more enlarged and blissful meditations upon the reserved kingdom; and I trust you will be able to walk by faith with the beloved of our soul, and many times to tread the courts of the heavenly Jerusalem in the risings of

devotion and love. The first and leading duty which rests upon you is that of keeping your own vineyard ; weeding the ground from day to day, as you may discover the corruptions which would arise within ; and seeking to know that sweet stream of the Holy Ghost, who, dwelling in the children of light, will cause the wilderness to blossom as the rose, and has engaged that your soul shall be as a watered garden. Keep your fixed observation upon this spot, my dear girl, that you may not imperceptibly be injured by the sin of luke-warmness, and doubt not the faithfulness of Him who is your life, and who loveth with an *everlasting love*.

But you have another very important calling, which I know rests upon your mind with some solicitude ; it is the path of duty respecting your brother's state of soul, and the hope you may possess of proving a blessing to him in the most important sense. Upon this subject I would suggest to you the remembrance of what is the universal state of the natural mind, and what the various difficulties which present themselves in such a prospect, when the necessity of conversion, and of surrender to Christ, is first presented to the soul. It is our duty indeed, as faithful soldiers of the cross, to maintain the requirements of our Lord, and never to alter the standard which the gospel has reared, from *any motive whatever* ; but, at the same time, judgment and discretion should be observed, lest by our hastiness, we rather obstruct than forward the work. I believe that gentle persuasion, combined with strict consistency of conduct, is the best means of prevailing. The *wrath of man* never yet could work the righteousness of God ; and sometimes our *zeal* is not sufficiently tempered with sympathy and patience. We should never forget how new and surprising the things of the spiritual life are to the natural mind ; nor how *once* we likewise were slow to

apprehend the necessity of any thing further than the discharge of some natural claims. The Holy Ghost alone can tear this veil away, and discover to us the sinfulness of sin and the defilement of our very best duties; nor should we ever be tempted into hastiness or discouragement, when engaged in such an important hope, as that of seeing the dominion of Satan overthrown in the heart, and the beautiful kingdom of Jesus established in its place. The work is altogether divine, and produced in the sovereignty of God's omnipotence. To Him let us look with patient faith and humble prayer.

I am sure you will receive these hints with an affectionate heart, and will know that they arise from the same principle in mine; may the Lord be your best Teacher and Guide, my beloved ——, and smile upon every effort that you make for Him. I trust we shall in the end see that He has not sent you in vain to your brother's house, and then we shall rejoice that as a grain of his precious salt you have spread the savor of his grace, and proved an honoured instrument in His hands.

Farewell. I commend you to the everlasting arms of Christ, with my affectionate love to your dear sister, and am in truth

Your affectionate friend and mother in Jesus,

M. S.

Pray let me hear from you soon.

CXVI.

Congeniality—Aaron's Breastplate—Strong Cordials—Voluntary Humility—Promises—Subjects—Parcel.

MY OWN BELOVED FRIEND,

WHEN I sat down in this way to engage myself in fellowship with you, I first opened the pages of your own precious communication sent to me in your last little packet ; and think it not strange when I tell you that I have been led on, passing from line to line, so long and so sweetly, that much of the time I had set apart for writing to you is gone ! It has however been spent in a feeling of nearness to your spirit very precious to me ; I cannot therefore say I would have had it otherwise, although perhaps some lines more might have been legible on paper.

Blessed be our Lord for His uniting Spirit, by whom we experience such anticipated delights of heaven ! And for ever may we, my friend, acknowledge the bond, and rejoice in its *perfection* ! Increasing experience of the nature of christian pilgrimage seems greatly to endear the sympathy subsisting amongst the Lord's true members ; but in a special manner *that measure* of sympathy which is found where there is a kind of indescribable congeniality in the flow of affection, and the deep character it assumes. There is undoubtedly this kind of peculiarity belonging to some who appear to be cast into a similar mould, as to the natural disposition ; and when the operation of the Holy Ghost is adapted to the prepared natural character, producing *another* species of similarity also, then surely there is rich enjoyment of communion, from which we may derive

much benefit, and whereby God may receive a tribute of glory.

I have often thought upon the beautiful emblem of the Redeemed, as contained in the stones on Aaron's breastplate; and have seen a great excellency in the different *kinds* of precious stones, representing the combination of every various character in the saints, as affording a more glorious splendor; yet there is, to such as are of similar constitution, a certain measure of relative enjoyment, arising out of their likeness, which I conclude may be lawfully loved and used. This however is our joy, that we occupy a place in the consecrated region alluded to, and live together in our Saviour's heart. And what shall we say when we remember also that this is an everlasting home, and that no power shall ever dislodge us from that dear abode? Surely our hearts are filled beyond the power of expression, when an eternal purpose of blessing so free, so large, is contemplated as our lot and portion!

I rejoice to mark, as I do, the growing *energy* of your faith, my beloved friend. We know that there is a difference between the steady affiance of a heart uprightly pursuing the way of truth, and the glowing *delight* which all along that way realizes the smile, the presence, the love of Christ. Privileged and safe as is the first-mentioned state, the last is more desirable. By it we feel ourselves animated to more vigorous measures, and constrained to make the wilderness resound with more joyous strains; and as these are honourable both to the Lord and to the disciple, it is a high and blessed privilege so to feel.

I know that there is a day of God's power for this, as for the first effectual call, and that it is meet that we should pass to this through preparatory exercises, humbling and reducing the soul. It would be impru-

dent to administer strong cordials ere the fever of natural pride and passion is reduced. " Give wine to him who is ready to faint ;" this is the season when the cup of salvation is given in its fulness and liberty. But we should be diligent, not only to seek the preparation and privileges, but to accept them when given.

We have sometimes a disposition to put away our own mercies in a sort of *voluntary humility*, not so acceptable to God as the generous acceptance of love, freely proffered and fully given. Is it not so, my beloved friend ? Let us not thus requite the Lord, but drink this wine, and " forget our poverty." Rich we are in Him we love, and may make our holy boast with the Apostle, " as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

How " I long " to see you, my beloved friend. I like that mode of expression, because, as used by the Apostle, it justifies the expression of a wish which otherwise possibly we might hesitate to utter. I do not like in general to say, I wish for anything. The government of our Lord is so wise and good, that our happiness and best interests are found in what He arranges for us ; to leave the management of all with Him is therefore most in accordance with faith and experience. I trust He will grant us the blessing, and that in it we shall be increasingly strengthened by the mutual faith of you and me. I rest therefore with affectionate gladness in the intimation you give, of a possibility that the time of " the singing of birds " may afford to us this mutual enjoyment of the notes of *our heavenly Dove* !

You ask me respecting the subjects in which I have advanced since my last report of our meetings. As to the blessed promises, my dearest friend, in them we wander from time to time, gathering up for particular

consideration what may be presented, as I trust, by the Spirit. I have not arranged them in any distinct order, but take them as it may seem suitable to the occasion. Precious has been the repast to my own soul, as in meditation and converse with my Lord I have sought to dive into their sweetness ; and I have reason to bless Him for the direction He gave that I should choose this course of subjects ! On Monday evening last our subject was from the character of Dathan ; next Sunday it will be that of Balak. You may trace us thus, and be with us in the way. At two on the blessed day of rest we have advanced in Acts to the 17th verse of the third chapter ;—last Sunday leading to the Ignorance mentioned. To-morrow I purpose to take the Revelation ; and probably the next Sunday, when you may unite in spirit with us, the nature of the *repenting*, as applied to the penitential state of soul exhorted to by the Apostle in the whole address.

On *that* first day of the week when you dropped the hasty line in answer to mine, and retired to ask a blessing on me as engaged at that time in the work, an interesting occurrence took place in respect of a Socinian who was present, and to whom we will hope some *abiding* conviction was given by the Lord in *answer to that prayer*. I mention this for your comfort and mine.

I am passing through the Lord's Prayer with my six o'clock meeting on Sunday. We are brought to "Thy will be done!" These meetings I know have your heart's interest, and I consider you are in the assembly ; knowing as I do that the Lord has given you a heart to love all we are occupied in, for Him.

I have not yet mentioned the contents of my parcel ; they must speak for themselves. You will be surprised at its size, but not displeased. It is a pity to bear double expense in sending at different times, still more

a pity to let books remain useless that might be used ; no possible reason existing why they should not as well be in your room as mine. You will feel with me, my beloved friend, freely and affectionately, and I am sure you will not grieve me by even a passing disapproval of what I have done. My M—— sends you her little packet, and says, "Say she will find her own little hymn in the book for children ; they were so delighted with it, they entreated it might be there." Thus she has made use of your property, my beloved friend, but not against your will, I know.

With tenderest love I drop my pen,
M. S.

CXVII.

Acknowledgment—Bible Society—Union of Sentiment—Stability—Threatening of Cholera—Family Interests.

MY OWN BELOVED FRIEND,

YOUR precious lines have reached me, multiplying the welcome burdens of grateful affection which I always feel for the sweetness of the Lord's voice speaking to me through you—a voice to which I would respond more frequently by communications to you, were I not so straightened for time. There is however no straightening in love ; and each day we live and press nearer our perfection in the Lord, we no doubt possess a more glowing sense of the blessedness of fellowship such as ours—so replenished with pledges of divine love, and so full of that peculiarity which attends a union in Jesus !

I have not *expressed* my grateful thanks for the pos-

session of the dear little books which came to me to excite a feeling of unspeakable joy in the Lord. I rejoiced and do rejoice in the testimony of the Spirit resting upon you, and as giving encouragement to your future efforts of this description. I have not distributed the whole; for as a little *treat-day* is near, on which some of our dear children drink tea at Stonefall, we calculate upon giving them this increase of pleasure, and intend to present each of the girls, able to appreciate the gift, with one of your dear little books. Where it has been given, it appears to have been met by a feeling of heart which you would value. May Jesus take up the little witness and accompany its voice by His!—this is all we ask respecting anything we speak or do in His name. And, O blessed consideration, this is what He waiteth to do in demonstration and power; for He is with us, and will let none of our words *fall to the ground*.

My heart and eyes overflowed at the sight and reading of your letter, along with the affectionate salutation sent me by those so dear to you and me. Pray tell them that I must appeal to their own affections for a language to speak for mine; for certainly in this way alone can we properly utter some of our feelings,—there are some which we cannot suitably utter. It is however in our power, my beloved friend, to *breathe* out our unutterable emotions to Him who reads the heart, and in this way we will all continue to demonstrate that we are of and in one Spirit! I should have replied to your enquiry respecting the Bible Society as soon as I had read it, but at the time I was suffering in health.

It is a pleasurable fact that so exactly do we coincide in sentiment upon the question, that almost the *exact words* also have been used by us, with you, in speaking upon this matter. We are of one mind entirely after a

question of such vital importance had arisen, and received its conclusion *as it has done*. Jesus must be acknowledged in His *glorious* character, and by an open confession; which, according to our faith, obliges us in an especial manner to bear witness against Socinian opinions. And as this is surely requisite in every period, so in the present day of blasphemy and rebuke most conclusively so. And it appears to me that it is in this way the true church will be called upon to demonstrate her simplicity and fidelity now in these eventful days.

I am quite sure you will unite with us in giving praise to our God for His animating Spirit, thus operating within us in such harmony and oneness of sentiment and intention. The Lord be praised! He is our uniting bond in all things. May we not also take occasion now to bless Him for having so abundantly kept us through the dark assault made upon the Foundation of our hope, and that the imposing pretensions, in that case, of the enemy fell and still do fall?

It is an unspeakable privilege to receive from the Lord that divine anointing which preserves all the inner man in the security of faith, not only as it respects our own experience, but in the witness which we are bound to give to others. I consider *stability* as one of the most precious operations of the Spirit; and surely, my beloved friend, it is a possession in character with the nature of our deep-laid hope, which rests upon the everlasting Rock, and our abiding superstructure, which is built up in the Spirit, and with our expectation likewise, which is full of glowing anticipation of the appearance and glory of the Top-stone. May our covenant God evermore enrich us by the outpouring of that Spirit, whose office it is thus to strengthen, establish, and settle us!

The value also of the only sure rule of faith is increasingly understood, as we look upon the wrecks occasioned by leaving the Guide; and we turn to the inspired page with an humble and grateful adherence, as to the light shining in a dark place.

Your dear sympathizing spirit will desire that I should tell you something of our local circumstances. You know we are near to the place visited by the Cholera; in consequence of which we have had preparatory measures observed, as helps towards mitigating the evil. Blessed be our Lord, we see the effect of habitual faith very much displayed by this circumstance; the dear people remaining unmoved by fear, and in many instances seeming to consider, that should it be commissioned here, it is to them an angel of peace. We have added to our other engagements a service held in the church every Thursday, wherein we exercise the grace of faith, I trust, in holy communion with our God. Thus are all the Lord's judgments rendered subservient to advance His cause and His people's experience. In all things the everlasting arms encircle us, and these will ever uphold us in life or death!

Our interesting little children, of whom I wrote in my last, are of course an increase of some care, especially as they are at present suffering from indisposition; they feel the effects of a change of climate; they are very endearing, and their half-orphaned circumstances touch the heart. . . . All this I tell you in answer to your tender desires, my own loved and dear companion; for well I know how truly you speak, when you ask to know something more of our interests. And although all that is merely human will soon be concluded, and natural ties be lost in the one great and perfected bond, yet so long as we are here below they are powerful,

and in many ways instrumental to the accomplishment of the Lord's blessed will and work.

Farewell, in dearest affection—in the affection that is in Jesus—I write the word. Offer my tender love to your dear circle, and believe me, in Jesus' love, always yours,

M. S.

CXVIII.

Ample Provision—Days and Seasons—Family Interests.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

How ample must be the provision we have in the Lord, which can thus afford content to appetites that seem insatiable; and that can thus fill up that void in the heart, of which by experience we are made conscious. Blessed be his name that He has not given us for our portion anything short of Himself. It is affecting to us to observe how the poor sinner is ever pursuing some fancied good, in which he hopes to find content; and how the emptiness of the heart yet miserably remains, whilst he is unconscious of the sufficiency there is in Christ. And wherever we see this melancholy exhibition of apostate nature, it is a doubly affecting consideration, that we have been rescued from it only by the invincible grace of Him, of whom, in this respect, I often feelingly sing these words of our little hymn :—

“ Jesus, what a love is thine;
All victorious in its course,
Nothing can withstand its force !”

Surely, had it been less than infinite and unchangeable love, our perverseness and misery had destroyed its

existence and actings ; but it has proved itself unquenchable, and stronger than death. On this let us meditate, and with efforts to retain the sacred fire, stir up the spiritual gift that is in us, and seek to have a never-ceasing flame upon the altar of our hearts.

Acceptable it must be to Jesus, when, notwithstanding our feebleness and impotency, He beholds the *effect* of His love, and looks upon the loving sacrifice we would perpetually bring ; and, O how sweet is the bond of mutual love !

My spirit was with you, my beloved friend, on the days so interesting and important in the course of our pilgrimage, so justly marked and dear with new pledges of this truth.

Not that we are to bind Him to any particular *method*, wherein He shall express His faithfulness ! Sometimes He will vary the mode of His communication, purposely to prevent the movements of our nature, which would induce a sort of customary expectation, in a kind of rest in days and seasons, unfavourable to a life of vigorous dependence, and prejudicial to our views of the divine *sovereignty*. “ The wind bloweth where it listeth ; ” and not only in first conversion, but in all after enjoyments, the Spirit’s actings are *kept free* ; and in order to evince this, the Lord will occasionally disappoint even holy expectation for a season, giving us in the issue greater blessing ! May we read these lessons, my beloved friend, and treasure up the interpretation which the Spirit conveys through all the ways by which we are led.

We are carried on sweetly with our little domestic charge. Blessed be the Shepherd. The dear lambs give evidence of great delight in all we teach them. The little one sometimes climbs on the knee of his nurse, and gently patting her face, says, “ Now do,

darling Martha, talk to me about God." He can repeat some of the Psalms very nicely, and says of the 23d, " Oh, I do love the *pasture*." May they be the buddings of eternal life! The eldest girl energetically takes up her Bible, and embraces every opportunity for what relates to its blessed interests. The next, a boy, readily unites in all sacred pursuits; and next, a little girl, has not much to *say*, but yields herself to the true *motive* when it is placed before her for action. * * *

I have occupied much paper in these domestic interests; but you asked for a little sketch, and I know you will take up the whole with a praying and praising heart. I must say farewell. Take this little messenger as it is sent, written in haste to redeem the time, but in love of tenderest kind. Give my faithful affection to your dear ones, and ever hold me to your heart as your own sister and friend in the dearest bonds,

M. S.

CXIX.

To a Godchild.

MY DEAR CHILD,

ALTHOUGH my eyes have never seen you, my heart carries you in it with tender and prayerful affection; and now that your dear mamma writes to me, and describes you as very ill in body, my affectionate sympathy is called forth into double strength. I seek to express it to you in this form, because I cannot leave home to go to you; if I could I would gladly hasten to share in the care of your precious parents, and to talk

to you of that blessed Lord who is the Shepherd of our souls, and into whose bosom, my dear child, I trust you have already been gathered; for even whilst here, in the wilderness of this world, Jesus is with his lambs, and the arms of eternal love are around us. It is a great comfort to me to hear that you love the children of God, and that you seem to possess that inestimable blessing which God alone can bestow; and this being the case, my love, you need not grieve at being sick, for sickness and death itself are blessings sent to bring us nearer home—and there is no home like that on high, where the light of God's countenance is lifted up in cloudless manifestation of his beauty and his grace.

You have been well instructed, my dear —, and have received from your own parents the testimony of Jesus, so that I do not write to you as one ignorant of the way of salvation. You know that there is no hope for a sinner but in the blood and righteousness of Jesus the Saviour; and although you are but a little one, you know, my love, you have many sins, being by nature and practice far from God, like all others, until the Lord is pleased to give us a new nature, which is acceptable to him as his own work—and new practice, which, as the work of his sanctifying grace, he will receive. Place your whole trust, my beloved child, in the finished redemption that the Lord has accomplished; and O bathe your soul in Jesus' blood—dress it in Jesus' righteousness—putting on the Lord Jesus Christ as your garment, wherein you will go and appear before God, and sit down in heaven. It will be a *very* great comfort to me if you can tell me that you feel your dependence to be placed on this foundation. Tell me, my child, through your mamma, if you cannot write yourself, do you feel that you need Christ's pardoning blood? Do you look to the merits of Jesus for your

acceptance? Is Jesus precious to you? Can you think of his bleeding love with tenderness and gratitude? And do you feel a humble belief that you are *united* to him? These *seem* to be hard questions to answer with certainty; but you may answer them, my dear girl, with a lowly heart, and *take* the consolation *freely* given, if only you experience in your affections these drawings to Christ; for it is not natural for us to love and desire him: therefore when we do, it is a proof that we have received supernatural life from him.

If Jesus is going to take you to himself, you are a happy child. It is better to depart, and be with Christ, than to have all the enjoyments that earth could give; and when once you have passed from this life, you will be put beyond the reach of every rough wind. It is said in the scripture, that Christ is “gone into his garden to gather lilies;” and what do you think he will do with them? We know; he will wear them in his bosom, and beautify his house above with them. Will you not like to be one of these lilies, and be gathered by the gentle hand of Jesus, and put into such a sweet place, to bloom with never-withering beauty? Yes, dear child, sweet flower, you will yield to your Saviour’s hand, and kiss it whilst it is plucking you from the stem whereon you now grow, and taking you from earthly parents to give you to your heavenly Father. And your beloved parents (*dearly beloved* by me) will yield you, and give you up to their God and your God, knowing they could in no way provide for you as the Lord is doing, and that in a little time we all shall meet again.

May the Lord be abundantly with you, and make all your bed in your sickness. May you, *indeed*, be my *god-child*, one that I shall see in glory and love for ever. My prayers are offered to our Lord for every support

and comfort of his presence to be granted, that whether it be his will that you live or die, you may be his in the love that is in Jesus.

Ask your mamma to write me how you are; I shall be very anxious to hear, if only a few lines. And, with tender sympathetic love to them, I am your very affectionate godmother,

M. S.

CXX.

Divisions in the Church—Antinomianism.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

So long a time has elapsed since I wrote to you, that it may truly appear a total cessation of our communion, yet indeed you were never more upon my mind and heart. I have sometimes felt, towards the throne of grace, a certain restless tendency upwards all the day long, if I have by any means been interrupted in the usual degree of fellowship there, anxiously desiring more enlarged interviews; and a degree of this sort of feeling I have had to you.

But the *much* I seem to have for subjects of discourse very frequently makes me despise and neglect a few moments in which perhaps I might have begun my letter, and so by degrees have filled my sheet. Grieved indeed should I be could I suppose it possible that anything could shake our affection or confidence towards each other. Surely the nearer we draw to the centre from whence our first bonds issued, so much the more we must apprehend of their divine and eternal nature.

Our flock, my beloved friend, is in a most interesting state in whatever way we consider it, and some things have lately combined to call for more than ordinary exertion, and to me, who at best am but a feeble mortal tabernacle, the labour of love has been exhausting ; but, thank God, during the whole of the summer I have been wonderfully strengthened and supported.

When first you entered upon the subject of that unhappy division which had taken place in the church in the south, I was not aware of the extent to which the evil had arisen. This little vineyard seems to lay in a corner of the earth so sheltered, retired, and hidden, that much of bustle and disputation which rends other scenes in pieces is not so much as heard of with us. We have been carried on in the simple pursuits of the precious gospel of our dear Lord, and what afflictions we have received have been of the nature of external rather than internal conflicts, and of what naturally arises from the various changes which take place in the members composing a flock. I considered the evil upon which you were agitated as arising from vain and self-exalted minds, departing from the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus ; and in some instances as the offspring of dislike to godly discipline ; but I did not consider to what a fearful extent it might spread, nor the various consequences which it evidently involves ; some circumstances have occurred, however, calling into more direct observation. And truly, my beloved friend, for you and for us I praise and bless the Lord that the good promise has been accomplished to us which pledges to keep the saints from delusion. O how sweet and dear is that passage to my heart, "*if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect.*"

I need not say to you that the apprehension of this heresy infecting our sweet little pasture must indeed

have been a painful one. Thanks be to the Lord's mercies the cloud is dispersed—^{say,} that which seemed to be charged with sorrow has descended in blessing; for the very apprehension has served to call forth the exercise of faith more vigorously, and to deepen the persuasion of our people that the doctrines according to godliness have been truly delivered among ^{it} them.

The danger of these new sentiments is very great, my friend! Were all their professors ^{yowdely} loose in *practice* as well as opinion, less harm might follow; but herein Satan is sometimes transformed ^{as} an angel of light, and there is much zeal, separation from the world, and external attraction; but the spirit, I think, is generally defective; pride, bigotry, self-confidence, disdain of restraint, contempt of others, are surely not the features of Jesus Christ; but they are very manifest under the mask of strict profession in many who hold these sad opinions.

Surely if any sincere though ignorant child of God should be for a time tainted hereby, they must be deluded by the idea that it puts more honour upon Christ. It seems to boast itself as making Him more all in all; yet, on the contrary, it appears to involve great ignorance of the extent of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, which was surely a righteousness *internal* as well as external, or no righteousness at all—it denies much (nay the chief parts) of the Holy Ghost's operations, and sets aside many express purposes of the word. By them sanctification is confined to *consecration*, or setting apart, which is all the personal sanctification it admits; yet it cannot get over the scriptures upon growth in grace, but alleges it chiefly to consist of going out of self and increasing in knowledge, and that holiness will flow of course is *by the way* admitted!

Never did I more earnestly desire a day's communion with you, as it is impossible by letter to enter at large upon these discussions. I hope, however, my beloved friend, that your heart standeth fast in the Lord, that you graciously know the intent of the privilege that "if the Son make you free you shall be free indeed;" not only in the holy boldness given by *imputed merit*, but likewise in the loving yoke which makes you *under the law to Christ*.

We feel it very necessary to act with decision. Certainly every private believer is bound to it in these times of wide-spreading error; more particularly as the legalists and others 'lump us' altogether in condemnation, and boldly affirm that the evangelical and the antinomian are the same identical character; it is become more necessary that we should shew how really they are opposed in sentiment, and particularly in such as are distinguished by any situation of influence in Christ's church.

Such necessity obliges, in some instances, to take up a painful cross, when those characters you have long loved in the Lord become the objects whom by this separation must be marked; but if we love father or mother more than Christ, we are not worthy of Him.

May God Almighty be pleased to check the progress of Satan, to recover His own from every such snare, and to vindicate His own holy and blessed cause! Surely we are in the last times, for every feature is according to the scriptural account of what shall peculiarly denote the rapid coming of the Lord. May we stand in our lot and be numbered with the rejoicing multitude!

I hope to hear from you soon, my dear friend, and shall welcome a letter. M— is very delicate, but very laborious, I fear beyond her strength.

Your attached friend and sister in our dear Lord,
M. S.

CXXI.

Grace and Glory—Divisions—Trial of the Flock.

My EVER DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR last interesting letter demanded a more speedy answer than it has received, and has been in my hand again and again, with the purpose of sitting down to commune with you upon its contents, when I have been interrupted and obliged to leave my desk. I now seize the leisure which an occasional indisposition affords me, and in a quiet room at Stonefall my thoughts turn upon you, and gladly greet you thus.

I often wish for a few hours of personal intercourse ; but it seems, my beloved friend, most probable that we shall no more see each other face to face, until in the fulness of our expected home we mutually rejoice with our God. This period makes a rapid approach. O may we be ready, and have an abundant entrance therein !

The daily experience which we obtain of the riches of the kingdom of *grace* may well awaken increasing desires after that of *glory* ; and the foretastes of Canaan quicken the longings of love to sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb. In the meantime, however, there remains much of wilderness-work ; and with the cultivation of the inward ground, and of the many waste places in others who surround us, we have enough to occupy the remnant of time, and to reconcile us to some lengthened years of exercise below.

The eventful period in which we live is calculated to stir up every zealous affection of the soul ; and certainly there is no idle time which can be properly

allowed. Perhaps no feature of these last times has been more affecting than that of the divisions lately happening in the professing church: the trial reaches so far in the christian experience, not only calling forth much concern for the interests of Christ, but also coming in such a form as greatly proves our own spirit of charity and submission. Were the persons infected openly severed from the flock, there would be less of painful feeling to endure. We might mourn the apostacy of such as we had hoped well of, but we should be spared the grief of beholding a subtle creeping evil *remaining* in the fold, and the many suffering affections which cannot but be familiar in cases where those to whom you have been personally attached, do, under the profession of the faith, lift up the heel against you, and attribute motives and principles to you which are altogether foreign to your heart.

But certainly, as is due, if the tenets are held which we esteem most deadly and dangerous, whatever may be the external conduct, it becomes us with decision to testify against heresy, and more particularly so when it is covered with an appearance which is commendable. Surely the faith of Jesus is something more than abstinence from pleasures, and a high profession. The mind and spirit of Jesus is everything as to vital possession! Upon the occasion of my interviews with some of the young persons who professed to have learnt these new views, I took out of my desk a book in which I had many years ago noted down the several leading abominations of Antinomianism, as they are treated upon by Flavel. I said, "Perhaps you are not aware of the nature and extent of these ideas; I will read them unto you as they are shortly detailed." Upon so doing, to each head the answer I received was, "All that I believe."

I rejoice that many valuable characters are brought back to the truth. The exposure of the matter will no doubt bring the upright from the dark snare. I think many who are drawn aside are by no means aware of the whole extent of the evil;—it is presented indeed in the most imposing form!

With you, my beloved friend, I do bless our faithful friend whose watchful grace has been magnified in our behalf, and by whose indwelling presence we have been preserved hitherto. O may we gratefully rest in His bosom, and trust to His love, that we may pass the dangerous seas in safety, and reach our haven in His everlasting arms!

Our field of usefulness increases. How may we praise our Lord that in every letter I have liberty to send you this testimony: a very wonderful prosperity attends the labour, and this surely is a call upon tributes of never-ceasing love. It seems marvellous now to cast our eyes over our private meetings, &c., and to see those very persons in devout attention who a little while since were high in scorn and pride;—but almighty grace must be prevalent, and Jesus will have out of every class and people jewels in His mediatorial crown, and pillars in the temple of God. . . . I must now bid you farewell. May all blessings descend and rest upon you and yours,

M. S.

CXXII.

Interests among fellow-members in Christ — Abasement and Joy — Benefits of Retirement — Mercies unfolded — Deprivations from Indolence — Stripping Time—Sponsors—Publication.

ONCE more, my beloved friend, I take up my pen in the midst of bodily weakness, but with affectionate longings for your spiritual increase, and much desire to hold sweet communion with you in the Spirit. How long I may be within the reach of present interests I know not; but surely the nearer we approach to the fruition of heavenly joys so much the more entire and simple is our love to each other; interests wherein our own fellow-members are concerned, will engage us, whether in or out of the body; and even before the everlasting throne we shall feel that we have much of dearest possession in the world so long as it remains. May the Holy Ghost impart to us an increase of the rich testimony whereby we are made to feel that we are one in Him!—it is a blessed security in the midst of the wilderness below, and it will prove a great part of that eternal enjoyment which we look for above.

I have now been confined for many weeks. You will enter fully, my dear friend, into all my affections under this visitation, as you have in times past; but I hope that a rich increase of demonstration from the inward Witness now gladdens my heart and renders this season of trial more precious than any that are gone!

How wonderful are the dealings of faithfulness which gloriously exalt our constant Friend and reveal Him to our faith, with attractions of grace and mercy that are unspeakable. I admire the wisdom by which He mea-

sures out the degrees of experience under which we ripen for our everlasting home; and as I compare one season with another, I rest upon this part of the review with great comfort and confidence.

Gentleness governs every method which He assumes. It is necessary that we should possess within us combined affections of abasement and joy and rest. And O how matchless is the operation of that indwelling Spirit by whom these things are produced in the heart; and feelings which might seem to be in direct opposition to each other keep an equal pace.

The Christian life is an interesting study; every step is luminous with glory to the Lord, and the more we understand the nature of its peculiar existence, and the means of nourishment by which it is maintained, so much the more of increased delight in the work of God must fill the soul.

We are greatly indebted to the Lord for appointing for us times of retirement, in which the spirit may have opportunity more freely to explore the treasures of the covenant; but opportunities are nothing without the immediate presence of that power by whom secret things are imparted to the heart, and the seals of the kingdom are broken open. He teaches us this, by leaving us sometimes with little sensible joy, and suffering the weakness of the earthly house to press heavy upon the inward man.

Under such frames we find how incapable we are to stretch the wing or soar beyond the region of present things. And perhaps we occasionally forget that such variety is *good*, and that eternal love is as much displayed when lowering sensations keep us humble, as when the stronger cordials are poured into the heart. It is natural to say, when we are upon the mount, "It is good to be here;" neither does our Lord object to

the high valuation of His rejoicing smiles; but when we are proposing to build our tabernacle there, we fall into temptation, and perhaps are only kept from it by such fluctuations as convince us that this is not our rest, even in its holiest condition, but that we are required to seek one to come. Thus every part of our present experience works out something beneficial in the end, and even our most dreary seasons have an appointment of mercy which is unfolded to us in due time. O that our faith may become vigorous in its actings, and enable us to know the purpose of love under the moment of trial; for it is sad when we can so little apprehend our Father's compassions until the cloud is dispersed and the blessing *sensibly* possessed.

We find it easy to reason upon and believe the unsearchable grace of our Lord in matters that are past, and in deliverances of old. Why do we not more cheerfully declare and feel the same truths, even when our sky is overcast and our cross presses heavy? May our God be pleased to shake off from us these cleavings of earth and sense, and shew us the glorious way which leads direct unto Himself in all the simplicity of constant trust.

I believe we are much deprived of spiritual triumph by reason of that fleshly indolence and sloth into which we sometimes fall without immediately perceiving our danger. Of all evils, perhaps this is one most to be dreaded; and it obtains so much advantage from inward corruption and from outward circumstances that we have need to watch with holy vigilance against its approaches.

Great enjoyments are evidently connected with great devotion; and whenever we let the affections sink below the standard which should ever be kept in view, we must be near a stripping time, when joys and victories

shall wither and decline. The tender care of Jesus is shewn towards us by *such* instant withdrawals of His smile; and what we should ask is, Lord, give me no token of approbation whilst I am allowing any declension.

Nothing is more likely to quicken us to the perception of our wanderings than the consciousness of that intimate fellowship once held with Christ being withdrawn. Like the bride of his love we become restless and uneasy, nor will anything again content us until we have sought and found our Beloved, and have learnt to hold Him fast. And to what, or to whom else shall we cleave? Ah! my dearest friend, experience proclaims the emptiness of every thing that is not possessed in Him. And surely the further we advance in our way, the more affectionately shall we say unto Him, "Thou art fairer than the sons of men, and altogether lovely,"—abundance and variety are richly found in Him. I wish that we may look upon His beauty more, and look and love, and loving be conformed to the image of Him in whom we rest.

You ask my opinion of the office of sponsors; and I believe we shall agree in esteeming it to be one of great responsibility, and not to be entered upon without much serious reflection. The origin of the institution of such an obligation explains its nature most simply. You know, my friend, it was esteemed with the first christians an expedient act of charity, and was intended for the greater security of the children who might be so unhappy as to have but one *christian* parent and the other a heathen. Upon the death of the christian parent the child of course fell back into heathen influence, and might after baptism be trained to idolatry. The sponsors therefore were engaged in such case, or in the neglect of the professing christian parent, to

instruct the child in christian principles, &c. The institution is retained as wholesome and good; nor is it less requisite to make this provision in our day; for, alas! the ignorance and spiritual death of persons called christians, is as awful as any heathen land can exhibit. It appears to me that where both parents are serious persons there is *less* occasion to interfere. I should be more willing to stand for a child that had not this advantage; for in such a case zeal, influence and authority, would be very desirable, and might be exerted with profit. But however the infant may be circumstanced in this respect, undoubtedly one who stands in such an office towards it, is bound to administer (as far as opportunity will admit) every counsel of heavenly wisdom, and to *seek* for occasions in which the requirements of Jesus may be made known. * * * *

I sometimes think my Lord may appoint me work in this way for a little season, and have some idea of endeavouring to arrange a course of progressive subjects for learners in the heavenly way. May Jesus direct all we undertake, and be pleased only to *use* us for the praise of His name.

Farewell, my ever dear friend; I am fatigued and weak, but my heart is full of affectionate communion with you still, and I trust that the Lord heareth my prayer that every blessing in Jesus may abide with you for ever.

Believe me your affectionate friend in His bonds,

M. S.

CXXIII.

Intercourse—Association—Impoverishing Conversation—Brotherly Love—Reconciliation in Heaven and in Earth—Guardian Interest of Angels—Popish Abuse.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

YOUR letter was brought to me in my retirement, and proved a sweet refreshment. I am still laid aside from labour of a public nature, but have felt so much better since the hot weather came, that I begin to anticipate a return to K—, and renewed exertion in the dear vineyard. Whenever this is my privilege, I shall have little time for epistolary engagement, and therefore I make no apology for presenting myself before you in this way, so immediately after your last, and rather press you, my beloved friend, to continue a more frequent correspondent than you were some time since. I am sure our Lord has blest us to each other; and where this is evident, it should be our part to cherish the channel as delighting in the streams, whencesoever they flow to our thirsty souls.

He worketh by what ordained means His own sovereign wisdom sees best to choose; and blessed be His name, we feel with grateful affection how dear an instrument is, by whom one drop of spiritual cordial is communicated to the heart. I am sure we have need of such cordials: this scene of exercise is abundant in trial, and greatly should we rejoice that in the midst of every tribulation we have an inexhaustible spring of comfort and peace.

How every day gives us some new cause for swelling the tributes which rise on high! Thanks be to our great Redeemer, He leads us in the rough ways His

own blessed feet trod, that therein He may give us his own pure and heavenly consolations. May we, my friend, have no greater ambition than to know the fellowship of His sufferings here, and to be fellow-heirs with Him hereafter.

I notice much what you say respecting the exercise of christian love, and can sincerely enter into all you express of the feelings which press on your heart. I have been much in the same state of mind in many periods of my pilgrimage, and therefore can fully understand in what way you may be disposed rather to delight in quiet and studious pursuits than in the converse of saints. The truth is, that even with the children of God there is oftentimes a great lack of that simple communion in the Spirit which ought to mark every interview we have, and where this is the case we necessarily feel a dissatisfaction, and more of an exhaustion of spirit than of replenishment. There is a style of conversation amongst some believers that is very impoverishing,—people, plans, characters, events, occupy almost the whole season; and especially in the present day we usually hear only of Tract Societies, Missionary works, and canvassing the features of the times, &c. &c. Now all this is very well in *its season*; but, when it engrosses the thought and the tongue, it is to be feared it proceeds from and fosters a barrenness of spiritual experience. For my own part, I confess that such society often leaves me in as cold a state as that of a mere worldling, and gives me not that sense of *feeding* which we should have with one another. By this means we tire of such intercourse, and perhaps are disposed to suffer more of decrease than of advancement in brotherly love. This sweet grace would necessarily grow, were we faithful to each other and to the Lord: Did we endeavour to aid each other in breaking open that alabaster

box of the eternal covenant from which so many rich spices flow, we should delight in every occasion wherein it was done. And Oh ! my friend, that there were in us more of close converse, more of coming to the foot of the Cross, to the depths of the heart, or to the interests of the invisible world !

Saints should have much to bring forward of a peculiar nature, and their fellowship ought to be a banqueting time, since Jesus has engaged such especial manifestations of Himself during the communion so exercised. Henceforth, then, let us try to make Jesus crucified a more prominent feature in our speech. I love that description of Christ's bride—" Her lips are like a thread of scarlet." May the Holy Ghost breathe upon ours, and make them drop with the testimony of the blood of sprinkling !

Our confidence in the interest felt for Christ's members by those who are removed into the world of glory, has abundant countenance from every part of scripture wherein things of this nature are held forth. It appears to have been a great design of the Holy Ghost to familiarize the saints with the sweet persuasion that Jesus' work *reconciled* all things in heaven and earth, (Col. i. 20.) Sin is an accursed thing, against which angels were indignant; nor could they look upon man with association of feeling, until presented to them in Christ as an object for whom they should bear a guardian interest (Heb. i. 14.) This was very expressively denoted in the adoring attitude of the cherubim over the Mercy-seat ; gazing with wonder and admiration upon the way of peace secured in Christ.

By the ministration of angels there must be a certain acquaintance with earthly things kept up in heaven,—even if separate souls do not themselves possess this delegated power. Angels probably carry tidings, as

Jesus intimates (Luke xv. 7.) And much of glory to our great High Priest in the heavenly regions must result from the various events of earth,—redemption having constituted this world the scene of God's peculiar actings, from whence the greatest revenue of praise must accrue to Him.

There is a passage (Rev. xix. 10) which would lead us to conclude that such as have been fellow-sufferers below are sometimes under commission to earth;—at any rate it appears necessary to the nature of that spiritual nearness which is between earth and heaven, that one should suppose all the family above acquainted with the Lord's faithfulness in His children below.

That it is not an article of faith expressly revealed is very gracious. We see how the church of Rome has blasphemously invested departed saints with a power which robs Jesus of His glory as the only Mediator; and knowing the idolatrous tendency of our own nature, especially where strong affections live in the heart, it is no doubt in mercy that we are kept from such an assurance upon the point as might endanger our simplicity.

May your dear mourning friend find the consolation which confidence in Jesus gives, who is a husband that never can be taken away: and if she knows her earthly partner rests in Him, may she be able to rejoice in his blessedness, and in the certainty that a little time will give them a reunion where no tears are shed, and no tumult shall disturb the breast!

Farewell, my ever dear friend;—let us pray for each other, and keep close to the side of our dear Lord; so we shall safely pass the desert, and reach our Eden above! Your faithfully affectionate

M. S.

CXXIV.

Indisposition—Resumed Engagements—Love of Work—Sweet Air of Heaven—Provident Remembrances—Table in the Wilderness—Native Inheritance—Painful Conflicts—Family Incidents—Book.

IT is always a delight to me, my sweet friend, to take out my paper with the design of dropping a few lines to you, and shall I not say that at this moment I am giving demonstration that so it is, for I am writing in circumstances of extreme bodily pain. It has just struck three o'clock, and after a restless hour in bed I have been constrained to arise and sit over my fire, nursing my poor body, which is a suffering tenement, although not very likely to drop immediately. As I felt an intermission of pain, my thoughts turned affectionately to you and the dear interests of your soul. In truth they have been with you many days, with an intention to write a letter that I might send by — ; but I have not been able to fulfil this desire. I thank God, however, my beloved friend, that a little work is restored to me.

I am not yet able to resume my usual engagements, but I have taken a few meetings and some private labours. For this lengthened term of effort in the vineyard I feel very grateful. To depart to the glorious mansions of eternal rest is indeed far better, as it respects the absolute fruition of all that our hearts desire ; nevertheless, I yet retain the earnest love of moments which may be given to work that angels do not perform, and which will soon be beyond the reach of our released souls.

Our working-time may seem to be long when we groan under the weight of a nature burdened by sin and misery ; but whatever may be our measure of endurance

in this mortal tabernacle, there is a certain delightful breathing of the sweet air of heaven even here below ; and when our faith and hope are energetic, we find in the wilderness such fruits as we might almost suppose grew in no other soil but the Canaan that is above. O may we diligently pluck these precious productions, as we pass along the high-road of our appointed pathway ; and find that our Jesus' remembrance of us is strong and *provident*, meeting our necessity wherever we turn, and preparing what is suitable to the appetites which are derived from Himself.

How expressive of an experience of this grace is David's assertion, "Thou preparest a table in the wilderness,"—what a feast is exhibited thereon ! In every part of the varied food something is seen whereon faith may feed, and by which the best health of our souls shall be nourished and advanced.

I often fancy I look upon this table as it stands before the eyes of every humbled sinner, and whilst I contemplate in the "Lamb roast with fire," the comprehensive provision of pardon, justification, peace and sanctity, I covet the hungry spirit that would always be feeding thereon, and admiring the matchless wisdom and love of that covenant which established itself in blood and merit of infinite, inexhaustible worth !

Oh ! my beloved friend, have you a faculty by which these bounties can be apprehended and appropriated, and will not your soul break forth in grateful acclamations ? Shall it be possible for us to know with all saints what is the height and breadth, and depth and length of the love of Christ, and will not our hearts anticipate the high employ which in a little time shall be ours in exchange for every mortal woe ? O I desire for us, as the monuments of His grace, such an enlargement of experience as may enable us in this world to

put a crown of glory upon Jesus' head, and may give to our pilgrimage-scenes some of those gilding beams of everlasting peace which it is our privilege to possess and to reflect!

It is notwithstanding a difficult matter to lift up our earthly minds and affections to any vigorous contemplation of these joys. We are miserably laden with thick clay, and the wings of faith and love are sometimes so clogged therewith, that we strive in vain to spread them upon the wind and to mount upon the Spirit's testifying power. Is it not mournful to find and feel how little we have of heavenly attraction, and how much of earth's! Truly we have reason to be abased in the dust whilst such conviction attends our daily walk; and we may confess that our native inheritance is beneath, and that aspirations after a higher home must be and are the fruit of sovereign grace.

Your own soul, my friend, appears to be led through these waters. The style in which you write evidently denotes that much painful conflict belongs to your way. Natural affection would suggest, "Be it far from thee!" thou shalt not suffer such things, for I wish thee, my beloved fellow-pilgrim, all joy in the Holy Ghost. But the spiritual exercise of sound judgment submits these wishes to the bosom of the Lord, for we are persuaded that all things are arranged for our final good; and that even the restless solicitudes through which we sometimes pass, are loving appointments most suited to our character and disposition, and so belonging to everlasting wisdom and truth.

It very frequently happens that we are of such a mould as to require instruction into the nature of our corrupt original, by the most lengthened evidence of our earthliness, pride, and impotency; where this is the case, no doubt, the Spirit will direct our exercises; and

the kind of furnace, by which the dross and tin will be consumed, will be suitably provided. All that we have to desire, is, that the great Refiner may sit by, and that the end may be the purification of our souls, that we may offer unto Him an offering in righteousness.

You seem surprised that I should count the arrival of Mrs. F—— a trying moment; but indeed I thought it so from the knowledge of that unaided domestic scene in which my brother is left with his very young and numerous family; but his God is with him, and I hope the necessity for her return will prove productive of many blessings. And she brought with her three most interesting creatures, for whom our affections are perpetually called forth—her own little girl, another little girl, and an Ayah. In the first I find much of intelligence and promise of the best gifts; in the second, who is only four years of age, very touching earnestness about the name and work of Christ, it is highly affecting to hear her in broken English utter her simple thoughts. I had related to her the history of Jesus' suffering, and after listening with great attention her little body shuddered, and with a look of horror she said, "O wicked children! to knock God's head and put on thorns," she was silent a minute, and then added, "I don't like that blood." I told her she must like the blood, although she hated the sins that caused it to flow, for nothing else would take out naughty spots in her, she looked earnestly at me, and parting her hair from her forehead said, "See, are naughty spots taken out of me?" Such little appeals from an infant's tongue are truly affecting; but what renders them much more so is, that she immediately hastens to poor Ayah when she has obtained a new idea, and energetically tells her all in Hindooostanee. It is striking to see her labour to put the sentiment in words, and point upwards to heaven

and downwards as to hell—Ayah listens with awe and tears; and this poor Mahometan is now anxious to be baptized; and so far as human judgment can reach is under deep and painful conviction of sin.

It would fill my paper to state to you the particulars of this poor sinner's utterance and apparent feeling. Pray for us, my beloved friend, that these may be dawnings of the eternal day. And O let us be excited by such tokens of our wonder-working God, to look unto Him who only can touch the heart, and before whose touch the mountains must flow down.

I bear all your interests truly within my bosom, and pray, with true affection, for you and yours, that all the smiles of eternal peace may be upon you—may you rejoice in an *abundant* entrance into the heavenly kingdom.

My little book is not quite ready, which I greatly regret, as this would have been a favourable opportunity to send it to you—it may be a month before done—its title, ‘A View of the Five Books of Moses, containing an explanation of the types, with references, &c., &c.’ Do not raise your expectations high, it is intended as a help to the consideration of such things, and to such as are engaged in teaching may its little attempt to shine with a beam of light be blessed of God—it rests with Him.

Farewell, my ever dear friend, believe me always yours in the true love of my heart, M. S.

CXXV.

To a faithful Servant when absent from Home with another Member of the Family—An early date.

MY DEAR MARGARET,

I HAVE deferred writing until my letter might be conveyed to you without postage. I have not forgotten my promise, and have been anxious you should have the texts, that the subjects may not be imperfect in your mind; I send therefore as many as I recollect you have been without, and I hope they will be applied to your heart by the same precious power who inspired them. I am persuaded that much consolation and steadfastness is found in the increase of spiritual knowledge, and I am desirous that I may leave my dear little flock well established in the principles of the christian faith, and furnished with such scriptural truths as may prove in season, whether under assaults from without or from the miseries of indwelling temptations and fears. The further we advance in the heavenly way, so much the more do we find the necessity of using the sword of the Spirit; and since God himself has declared that his people perish for lack of knowledge,—that is, are led into divers errors and infirmities for want of sanctified cultivation of their minds in heavenly wisdom,—I earnestly pray God that we may all endeavour to be freed from this danger; and enabled to worship Him, not only with the heart's affections, but with the understanding also!

I believe we were on the doctrine of Redemption when you left us, and that we have had Justification and Vocation since. By vocation is meant that effectual call of God which is applied by the Spirit to the elect soul,

and leads from the miserable service of darkness into the sweet and blissful subjection of the saint to the cross of Christ; and you will find those scriptures which I have chosen speak of the privilege of such a calling, and put motives before us to use it with diligence and love.

My dear girl, may you have the witness in your heart, that the sovereign choice of God's never-ending love has fallen upon you, and be able to draw from the words of life and peace all their sweetness and joy. Looking simply to Jesus, you will find a rest for your soul when most weary; and notwithstanding the manifold difficulties and sorrows of the way, you will experience that the everlasting Arms underneath you are sufficient to sustain in every time of need. I have myself mercifully experienced this in every trying season, and never more so than in my late severe sufferings; which have been made so easy and sweet to me that in truth I could not wish them otherwise.

The hours of sickness, which have wasted my bodily strength, have proved blessed occasions for the display of the compassions of Jesus; and the pledges of a building prepared for me, not made with hands, have made me many times wait with longing expectation for the voice which should call me to my desired home. I hope, my dear girl, that the same free and wonderful grace rests upon you, so that the prospects of a separation of the soul and body, fearful as it may be in its nature, is now the moment to which you look in faith, as that which shall deliver you from all conflict and sin, and shall put you in possession of Him whom having not seen you love, and who is established upon the throne of your heart, as Lord and King of every affection there.

Give diligence, I pray you, to maintain your profes-

sion to the praise of Him who hath called you, and let patience have its perfect work. Enduring to the end, you will soon enter into your Master's joy, and every tribulation here will be lost in the fruition of His eternal love.

Believe me ever remembering you with unfeigned affection ; your tender care of me when I was ill is never forgotten by me, and more especially the opportunity it afforded of strengthening those bonds of Christian union which I trust, my dear —, the Lord has granted us. I am but very poorly at present, and indeed I look for little of renewed strength during my remaining journey ; all my desire is, that whether it be much or little, I may have grace to be spent for Christ, and living or dying to be His.

Farewell, my dear girl. May every blessing which Christ can bestow be granted to your soul, and your name be written in the book of life. I shall be glad to hear from you, and am truly your most affectionate mother and friend in Christ,

M. S.

SCRIPTURE TEXTS.

Redemption.

| | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Exodus vi. 6. | Hosea xiii. 14. | Ephesians i. 7. | Isaiah xliv. 22. |
| Psalm cxxx. 8. | Galatians iii. 13. | Luke xxi. 28. | Hebrews ix. 12. |
| Isaiah xliii. 1. | 1 Peter i. 18, 19. | Jeremiah xv. 21. | Revelation v. 9. |

Justification.

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Isa. xlv. 24, 25. | Acts xiii. 39. | 1 Cor. iv. 4. | Isaiah 1. 8. |
| Romans iv. 25. | Romans viii. 33. | Romans iii. 28. | Titus iii. 7. |
| 1 Cor. vi. 11. | Galatians ii. 16. | Luke xviii. 14. | Psalm xxxii. 2. |

Vocation.

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Proverbs ix. 5, 6. | 1 Tim. vi. 12. | 1 Peter v. 10. | Hebrews iii. 1. |
| Romans xi. 29. | Hebrews xi. 8. | 2 Peter i. 10. | Revelation xix. 9. |
| John x. 3. | 1 Peter ii. 9. | Phil. iii. 14. | |

Illumination.

| | | | |
|------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Isaiah liv. 13. | Acts xxvi. 18. | Isaiah vi. 1. | 1 Cor. ii. 10. |
| John viii. 12. | 2 Cor. iv. 6. | Eph. i. 17, 18. | 1 John ii. 20. |
| Matthew xvi. 17. | Psalm cxix. 135. | Eph. v. 14. | 2 Peter i. 19. |

CXXVI.

Fellowship of Saints—Reward of Grace—Ministry of the Gospel.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

IT cannot be otherwise with me than that I should be very dilatory in answering the letters of those I love ; but in truth the necessity of being less frequent in the use of my pen in this particular matter does not interfere in the least degree with the current of warm affection that flows from my heart to such as are one with me in the hope of the gospel.

To you, my dear friend, I must ever feel the power of this bond, combined with a grateful remembrance of days that are past, when we took sweet counsel together, and had a closer intercourse than now falls to our lot ;—rolling years serve only to increase the simplicity with which we must needs love the Lord's blood-bought people, by showing still more clearly the vanity and perishable nature of all inferior ties, and the real importance of the fellowship of the saints in the judgment of Almighty God. We are also hastening to the vision of our God in realms of everlasting day. Every succeeding year brings us rapidly to the completion of our desires ; and in a little time we shall stand on the high mount of God, and join the brilliant company that shine as the sun in the kingdom of our Father. O how exhilarating is the thought, and how precious the hope that anchors within the veil, and fully apprehends the rest prepared above ! Let us cherish this hope, my beloved friend, and strive to know still more and more its purifying and cheering character.

I am persuaded that the diligent soul shall be made

fat. There is an indissoluble connection between obedience and enjoyment: nor can we be surprised at this, when we consider the nature of our great and glorious God. Free as He is in the distribution of his gifts, He is faithful to acknowledge the labour of love, and to the praise of his own grace has been pleased to pledge himself never to forget our work, nor to be unmindful of his own engagements;—of truth He has promised to smile upon, to support, and to recompense His own operations within us. Wonderful grace, that He should work all our works in us, and then vouchsafe to make us the acknowledged vessels into which He pours his approving blessing!

My soul contemplates this method of grace with admiration and adoring praise; and Oh! my friend, I earnestly hope and desire that we may drink into these discoveries with still greater power of appreciation, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

I bless the Lord who continues to you the mercy of the ministry of the gospel. How many anxious hours must the sheep of the pasture have suffered lest this gift should be withdrawn. But the Lord will never let his people suffer a scarcity of spiritual food if they are dependant upon Him. As Head of the church, He is engaged to provide pastors who shall feed them with knowledge; or in the dispensation which deprives them of the abundance of public means, will undoubtedly compensate the loss by the more plentiful impartation of wisdom and peace through the private means. Thus whilst we feel and express a due solicitude for the continuance of our precious privileges, we may always repose on the shoulder of Emmanuel, whose government shall triumph, and by whom the children shall have bread.

In the midst of the uncertainty that seems to attend

outward things, how consolatory is this persuasion, and how does it tend in every situation to hush the emotions of nature into peace, and to teach us to be still, and to know that the Lord he is God! May you, my dear friend, ever find your voice accepted on high, and rejoice in the answer to your prayers and in the assurance of faith. Believe me, I ask these things for your soul with persevering affection, and I trust that you live in the experience of them in all their establishing power. * * * * *

I am ever your affectionate friend in the best bonds,
M. S.

CXXVII.

Sun of Righteousness—Altitude of the Church—Signs of the Times—Delusive Wonders—Unhallowed Speculations—High-minded Repose—Healing Day.

I NEED not endeavour to assure you, my ever dear friend, that the sight of a letter directed by your hand to me was indeed very welcome. Though it be long since we saw each other face to face, never, I trust, shall we lose the lively sense of the power which drew us together, being from Him who will maintain and perfect the bonds of our affection, in a world more suited to the experience of the life we have received than this world can be! Whilst writing this sentiment I feel an inward monition to which my spirit turns attentively. It is true that in heaven alone the full glory of the Sun of Righteousness can be displayed, and consequently *our* beauty will have its proportion of glory accordingly answered—"We shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as He is." Yet even in this lower scene we shall

have the letting down of the bright beams ; and in proportion to the degree in which we live beneath their immediate influence, we expand and open out the various tints which belong to flowers planted in the garden of the Lord. It is well for us to remember this, seeing that we are such procrastinating creatures, and so ready to adopt any notion which may favour our *low* expectation of *present* attainments.

We are not straightened in the Lord ; and since Jesus says, “ Ask what ye will and it shall be given you,” we have full encouragement to desire, expect and request the large possessions which are laid up for us in Him ! To this holy wrestling the faithful Spirit seems ever prompting us through the most powerful motives ; shewing us how by diligent communion with our Lord, we reap abundantly from the seed-time of his suffering days ; and how on the contrary, when we relax from this diligence, we reap sparingly as it respects our consolation and usefulness. These are mighty considerations to loving hearts, and it is very gracious in the Holy Spirit thus to act in us. At all times we need this holy intimacy with our Lord ; and the attitude of his church should ever be remembered ;—“ Going up from the wilderness *leaning upon* her Beloved.”

Truly, my beloved friend, we may well be so described, since He has set us as a seal upon his arm, and taken our government upon his priestly shoulder. But we know there is a difference between being seated there in the everlasting covenant, and *living in* the enjoyment of the practical results of that distinction.

This is a special day, however, for realizing the privilege, for it is the perilous day of which we are forewarned ; and who can keep or uphold us in this peril but the Mighty One; as it is written, “ If it were possible they should deceive the very Elect ;”—blessed be God

for the *impossibility*! “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” “Begotten of God, that wicked one toucheth him not.”

If living dependently we shall be preserved; and although passing through the fire, we shall be kept even as the men of old, even without the smell of fire passing upon us. We see the chastisement which attends the want of humility and watchfulness, not only in such as are awfully and *wholly* perverted, but in the memorably warning words (Dan. xi. 35)—“Some of them of understanding shall fall; to try them, and to purge and to make them white!” May the Lord cherish in us the disposition of simplicity, and keep us lowly, and keep us to the *word*! If our eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light;—*single*, calling no *man* Master or Father!

Alas, my beloved friend, the *professing* church has lost her *dove's* eyes in this respect; and even the true members do in some instances, and for a season, sin against the requirement, by looking to the opinions of men, and imbibing the schemes which originate not from revelation, but from the minds of those who would be wise above what is written.

This has been very affectingly the case in the late distractions which have distressed the church. We are not to be surprised: in fact, were it not so, one of the most important of the signs of the last times would be wanting. And did not these sad demonstrations come with remarkable accompaniments, they would not answer to what Jesus describes as mighty signs and wonders, *so* delusive as to endanger the Elect, were it not for the divine preservation given them. Ah! let us bear in mind it is from “false prophets” to prepare a “false Christ;” and hear the words of our true Teacher—“Go not after them!” Neither let us forget the words

(2 Cor. xi. 13—15,) I mean so far as to be prepared to resist the beguiling argument, that such and such persons cannot be deceived because their lives are so holy. This is frequently said. But the depths of Satan are always so veiled, else they could not prevail against the church. And if, though holy in respect of their habitual intention, they do nevertheless allow the workings of unhallowed speculations;—they wax heady, high-minded, and are subjects on whom Satan can act for his end, being allowed so to do for the punishment of their presumption.

It may seem to you, beloved friend, rather unsuitable to the limits of a *letter* that I should have gone out thus; but my pen has been running on upon a subject which deeply interests my heart, both in respect of the honour of the beloved, atoning holy sacrifice, Jesus our Lord, and for his poor people; for if the foundation be removed, what can the righteous do! And I feel for precious souls, alas! alas! driven for a time away, and piercing themselves through with sorrows! And what is very affecting in their condition is, that (as always attends error) there is, so far as I have had to converse with such individuals, a high-minded pertinacity and a subtle working of self-complacent comparison with others, that is an impregnable wall around the understanding and affections, which none can throw down but God alone.

However, two things appear in the face of the heresy which should startle the upright, and constrain them to *examine* their way;—namely, the destruction which is aimed at the most *essential* doctrines, and the *character* produced by such sentiments; in most instances, very far from the *real* image of Jesus. Let us, my friend, repose. Our living Head is able to govern his own concerns—and He is willing. All things shall work

together for good,—His glory shall be secure, and His sheep never perish !

Blessed be His name, that here in our little flock we prove the Shepherd's care. We have not had any instance in which the errors of the day have been received. We go on as in the dear pasture where He feeds us, in this respect, in peace! Let all hail the dawn of the healing day,—when Jesus comes, Truth shall prevail !

We continue working in the same sweet domestic bonds as usual ; and we exist both temporally, naturally, spiritually and relatively, by marvellous and unceasing supports. The life of faith is thus brought out into its exercise, and so long as we have a work to do here, no doubt He who gives the work will give the power.

Do not fail sometimes to refresh me by a few lines. They are always cheering to me, and make me call to mind past days of faithfulness, which is a sweet enjoyment for the soul. Farewell, my loved friend.

M. S.

CXXVIII.

Special Seasons—Indwelling—Labour for others—Natural Quietude—Unbounded Expectations—Uncovering Mind—Mutual Supplications.

I CAN very little express, my ever dear friend, how sweetly welcome your last letter was to my heart. There are special seasons with us, when, perhaps, we may say we seem to be particularly prepared for the visitations which are coming upon us, whether they be

prosperous or adverse, great or small. Surely it was thus with me when your letter was put into my hand. It followed one which had rather grieved my spirit, because there was a disposition to fruitless controversy in it ; and I broke the seal of yours with a sigh.

The sweet lines written by your hand, and savouring of so much affection and peace, seemed to act like some notes of the dove ; and when I folded up the paper, I pressed it to my lips, not only in love to you, but in thanksgiving to the Lord. Our blessings are doubled to us when we can in this way realize the voice of the Lord in them ; and very precious are all the occasions wherein the Spirit enables us so to do by his lively impulse on the heart. Since this ability proceeds from Him, let us, my beloved friend, cherish close fellowship with Him. As an Advocate in the bosom, He will successfully plead the cause of peace, establishing Jesus there ; and as a Comforter He will powerfully prevail to make us rich and blessed in the sense of divine goodness, acting in all things to us for good.

No doubt, were we more intently and constantly to say, " Awake, O north wind, and blow, thou south, upon my garden," we should be in a more habitual possession of those delights than is usually the case with christians. We do not enough live upon the Holy Spirit as our indwelling Lord ; He delights to take up the things of Jesus and shew them, and to be to us all that Christ promised in His covenant-character. But there is such a thing as grieving this Spirit, and then ensue cold doubts and chilling fears,—the lamentable tokens that He is grieved !

To those who are mercifully appointed to active labours for others, a means is provided which is calculated very much to defend the soul from this danger : there being a necessity to live upon the Spirit for every mes-

sage and for all its effect; and this is one of the mercies which belong to such a calling, for which also there is a great responsibility.

I often feel much for the more retired pilgrim, who by lot or by sickness, &c., is less called out; lest the *circumstances* should beget too much *natural quietude*. But, after all, we come to this recollection, that He is faithful who keeps the souls of His saints, and that His visitations are all in accordance with the infinite love of God and the individual necessities of His people.

How blessed is our privilege to repose on this assurance, and how sure the prosperity which the Lord is pledged to maintain. In this mind, my beloved friend, we may most cheerfully meet the lot which is given to us, for we know that wisdom and love are the direction of our way.

Our experience of this, my friend, since first we met has been rich and enriching; and as we mature in our discernment of the grace of Jesus, it is meet that we utter His praise.

Perhaps it is by the exchange of our thoughts and feelings on these subjects that we gather increase of cheerfulness in sustaining the cross; and thus fellowship on earth does something for us that resembles the higher communion that awaits us above.

O how gratefully I bless the Lord, that by giving a sacred triumph to his cause in his servant at —, you will possess an open well, where these waters will flow. I rejoice for the consolation to Him, and likewise for this provision for the little flock around you. We are not however to be *surprised* at these things; it is no strange thing when fiery trials attend the faithful disciple; and it is nothing strange when Jesus walks with His own in the furnace, and when they come forth

visibly delivered. Wonders have been recorded in the word, by which our faith is taught to act with unbounded expectation ; and assuredly the wonders which accompany the redeemed in our times are answerable to those in their degree and kind. Never let us doubt the issues of tribulations which are upon us for Jesus' sake ; He is our sure defence and our strong tower. Many, my beloved friend, have been the marvellous demonstrations of this kind which rise before my eyes when I take a retrospective view of days past ; and after each contemplation of this kind, I return with an enlarged understanding of that precious testimony--“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever !” May He graciously impart to us somewhat more of his unwavering mind, and cause the profession of our faith to partake of this stability. In the course of our pilgrimage we discover the need of this holy equality, and the blessedness of remaining on the foundation ; not suffering by the cruel winds of false doctrine which beat mightily upon us, nor loosing our anchor from that blessed Forerunner who has for us entered within the veil ; He will keep us, my friend--let us fear no evil !

We are happily situated in our vineyard. We know so much of the tempest and the trials by which Satan is disturbing the church, as to make us look to the state in which we are, and to the armour of God. But hitherto our dear ones are so much engaged in their regular walk and relative labours, that we seem to be comparatively at peace and unagitated by the storms. O may we add this to the number of our mercies, which call for double devotion and diligence !

Thank you *most affectionately*, my dear friend, for wishing that we might meet again. Our God will direct it for us, if so it is to be. My own steps seem to be directed at present to the pasture where I am ; but I gratefully appreciate your expressions of love.

As to my judgment respecting my present call, it is much governed by what I see of existing circumstances. There is manifestly growing zeal for hearing—much fervency in those who are ready to give their help in districts, &c.—a large and increasing school of young ones—many heretical opinions abroad in the kingdom—many intimations of approaching trials from the Lord—pledges of the rapid approach of our Lord's return—and occasional intimations in the state of health which our beloved — has been visited with, that it is *possible* our time for *so* labouring may not be much prolonged. All these considerations seem to bid us work while it is day, and forbid our moving except as some providential necessity is sent. My sweet girl, too, is so delicate that I feel *her* work very important, and that it may be rapidly finishing. I think she has never recovered a fall she had some years since; it affected a vessel in the head, and since that time she is seldom free from pain.

These are circumstances which awaken thoughts and feelings in me that your own heart will better understand by its own affection than by my pen; but, as you well know, all tending to increase simplicity and a *waiting* heart. Let us rejoice that notwithstanding such things accompanying the way, we are enabled to walk, and are satisfied in the Lord.

My heart sympathizes most tenderly in your sufferings. But how good the Lord was, that when your bodily endurance was greatest, then He imparted the more abundant inward peace. He ever does this, reserving his cordials for the time of exhaustion, and *never* failing to give them when needed.

I am not surprised that your general habit is not joyful, and especially when an *active* spirit is in this way checked in working; but you *have* the Lord, and

therefore you have *the joy*! What indeed is our rejoicing but Jesus' finished work? and what so assuring as the grace that makes us willing to work or rest—to be sick or strong—to exult or weep, *as He will*; bringing us into the power of saying truly, "Something or nothing, just as it pleases thee," and to know how to apply the Baptist's words—"He must increase, I must decrease?" In this way we grow into substantial possession, "as having nothing, yet possessing all things!"

With *joy* I meet your wish, my beloved friend, respecting prayer; and I will also ask you to combine in yours with me a supplication for a poor soul now under *sad melancholy*, as *hopeless*, and for whom I am much interested. Ask that Jesus may loose the band of unbelief and deliver from mental malady. I will fervently pray for yours—God so helping me.

The time when I would appoint this meeting in the Spirit would be on Tuesday mornings, at eight o'clock, if that will suit you. I shall do this, expecting that our souls are engaged at one time in importuning the Lord to do these mercies, which He *delights* to do. He is not reluctant in giving, but waits that He may hear our voice, *loving* to hear it. Tell me if this hour is not suitable. Henry does not mention —, since the time of his marriage, when he wrote very affectionately of him: probably their station may be distant. Henry is at present at Meerut, on a visit to my brother, by permission of the governor-general, to whom he is chaplain, as perhaps you know.

My paper is full, and I must say farewell. Think of me as I do of you, in the bond of love, which makes us one in Christ for *eternity* as in time. O may you ever be blest in peace and conscious rest within the everlasting beam.

Believe me, with my full heart, yours in very truth,
M. S.

CXXIX.

Covenant Peace—Sunshine—Change in the Town—Curate—History of Christ's Church.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

My heart rejoiced to receive tidings from your hand, although the joy has been blended with chastened grief. I sorrow with you in the trial through which you have passed, but ours is not a sorrow without hope! The shades that are thrown upon our way by these dispensations, have with them the softening and sanctifying light from heaven; and in such a case as that now in our thoughts the light has been full of covenant peace. And oh! who can describe what that impartation gives! Thanks be to the Lord for the manifestation to the dear spirit that is gone, and for the power in which it has been given and is given, to those who for a little while remain.

These scenes are amongst the gracious methods by which invisible objects are more easily realized; and I often consider what is placed in the midst of privilege which we inherit here as stated in Heb. xii. as designed for this end, "Ye are come, &c.," "and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

It is true we want no other attraction in our blessed home but the Lord Himself; yet it serves as a sort of lifting of us up into that region, where we are made to feel that we are *one family* with those who are gone before.

I thank you, my love, for telling me how sweetly your dear sister yielded up her spirit. These are precious demonstrations of the Lord's faithfulness, and give us

new causes for praise and trust whenever they occur. May we be animated in our heaven-directed way, and press towards the mark that is before us with increasing love and zeal !

I delight to retrace the days that are past, so as to bring my thoughts to that season wherin the Lord first brought us into fellowship. It was a precious day of sunshine, and although we have passed through many a varying scene since that period, we find it sunshine still ; for we have lived beneath the countenance of our God, and it has been ripening in its rays. We are more matured in experience, and nearer the hour when the hand will come to gather us home.

Could you look into our town at this time you would be surprised at its changed aspect. It is in size grown into more importance, and in other respects looks more a town than it used to do. The inhabitants too are more numerous, and there is less of *extremes* in the degrees of station, &c., so that there is more of general intercourse. Our vineyard has ever been abundantly blessed, and fruitful amidst many trials and endurances, and we have cause to speak to the praise of our God. My M—— is acknowledged in more than an ordinary degree, and has a lovely day-school of which she is herself the mistress ; for she does not find any pleasure but in being spent for Christ. And now, at this season, when we might have supposed that the lengthened dispensation to this place would be drawing to a close, it has pleased the Lord to send us a curate, in a very providential way, whose preaching is attended with such attraction that we have scarcely room in our church to accommodate the hearers. His style is energetic, affectionate, bold, and awakening. All *sorts* of persons hang upon his lips, and miserable sinners come thronging in to hear ; we hope it is in mercy for the recovery of them,

and that a remnant will hereby be brought in. We consider this gift a special mercy, and also now all quarters of the town are alert for the church, and in this way, we pray the Lord, that error and darkness may be repelled.

I always like to tell you of the Lord's dealings with us; it seems to me that this is one of your homes, and I know you take an interest in all that concerns our work in Christ. Truly, we can testify that wonders have been wrought for us in our work,—as proves the truth of the promise, that strength is given for the day. *What* an unfolding will take place when the history of Christ's church is published in the eternal world!

God bless you, my beloved friend; may we feel the everlasting arms around us, and in *every* condition confide in that embrace.

Your tenderly attached friend in Jesus' love,

M. S.

CXXX.

High Places of Zion—Courteous Compliances—Hallowed Altars.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM very unwilling that our correspondence should cease, yet there sometimes appears a kind of probability that it may be so, as to the exchange of communications by letter; we are each of us so much engaged in the discharge of those duties which the Lord has connected with our lot, that we have little time to sit down formally with the intention of writing letters; but let us, my friend, at least, occasionally thus tell to each other that we are borne in affectionate remembrance, and cease not to pray for one another.

I have blessed accounts of you and of your course in the Lord, from time to time, through others, and my soul rejoices that as you reach nearer to the eternal rest you press the more earnestly for an *abundant* entrance. Ever, my beloved friend, aim at the *high* places of Zion, and may your feet attain to the blissful elevation in the sufficiency of the Lord. I shall be glad to hear from yourself, and how the Lord has been dispensing His mercies to your soul. I believe our Lord will quickly sound the great trumpet and gather His own to his standard, and overthrow His opposers in destruction. What then is there in this world that should engage or interest the hearts of the redeemed, excepting what is in connection with this glorious manifestation : ‘ Seeing that we look for such things, what manner of people ought we to be ? ’ O let us, my beloved fellow-pilgrim, awake from every sluggish or selfish influence, and in the energy of ardent faith and devoted love, stand ready to fill the lot that may be assigned us in that day to the glory of our Lord.

Surely there never was a period when the rousing addresses of God’s word could have greater emphasis, or be addressed more *individually* to every disciple of the cross. The professing church has had a long day of comparative peace, and the question of religion has become a matter of fashionable enquiry. In fact we may say the world has appeared ready to afford more comfortable accommodation to christians as they journey through it, than was formerly thought admissible— asking only some courteous compliances in order to make it wear the garb of friendship. Alas ! hereby, are we not constrained to say, the real character of the true church is greatly obscured ? and even the saints are so hid in the mass of profession, that there wants something to bring them conspicuously forth. I believe our Lord

will do this work ; and already we may surmise in what *way* He will do it; for differences of opinion break forth amidst professors, upon the most essential truths, and specially upon the great requirement of *high spirituality*, and conformity to this part of Christ's image.

My heart is engaged from time to time in earnest supplication, that the anointing from heaven may come down in abundant power upon the Lord's own people ; so that soldiers of the cross may stand forth, and able pleaders for the truth make a stand against the subtle attempts of the foe.

My beloved friend, join me in prayer that *we* may be of this forward number ! Let us anew consecrate our all to the service of our Lord, and offer our hearts as hallowed altars where He may kindle the sacred fire and maintain His own dominion. I beseech the Lord to bless you and to prosper all your labours of love, and to fill you with unspeakable peace.

Ever yours in Jesus' faithful bonds !

M. S.

CXXXI.

Indisposition—Disguised Love—Centred Affections—Girls' National School.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

You already know that since you left us we have been under a visitation of sickness, by which all power to write letters has been taken from me ;—the knowledge of this will have prevented any hard thoughts from arising, which in any other case would have seemed somewhat reasonable. From you, however, my dear

friend, I do not know that I ever received a hard thought.

My spirit has many times taken an affectionate flight to you, when, during the long and restless nights that have been passed, your interests and all your concerns have been the subjects that have called them forth; and I trust we have proved the blessed power, which it is our privilege to possess, of maintaining the communion of soul that has long sweetly subsisted between us. The painful and dangerous indisposition of my suffering M—— seem now mercifully passing away. *

* * * I am not well in body, but the abounding love of Him who never varies in any of His manifestations, is present to make all well in the things which are alone worthy our desires. What can we ask for more, my beloved friend, than manifestations such as these? Love, however disguised, *is* love, and sooner or later unfolds itself in the demonstration of the wisdom, faithfulness and power with which it is attended, and by which it is governed. It is not of much importance to us in what form the Lord reveals himself, so long as we are living in fellowship with Him; and perhaps we never see his sweetness and excellency so much as in what nature calls a trial? In your own pathway, my beloved friend, you have frequently been so greeted from the Lord—nor is the prospect before you unmixed with cloud. Much and tenderly do I sympathize with you in what will attend the departure of your dear husband; for I know that your heart will be in pain; but still we can say, in every hour and under every change, “The Lord is here!” and with and in Him find a sure repose. *Herein* we have our portion in this life, and far above what any can pretend to, excepting those who in the bosom of everlasting love can pour forth their whole soul. Little indeed is it

known by the darkened mind, and as little by the *divided* heart, *what* Jesus is to His own. But as grace has triumphantly united our hearts to fear His name, that is, gathered our scattered affections into one, and united them in himself; we ought to speak both to our own souls and to others the high praises of the Lord, who is our Rest !

I hope, my dear love, you do not intend to write only as our letters may *ask* a reply; you know the nature of my engagements, and that of my sister's uncertainty of health, and will not let the comfort you can give us by your communications hang dependantly upon the circumstances of when or how often we may write; we are not our own. The distribution of hours is fixed for us by each day's opening duty, and the works that our Father has ordained for us to walk in. This you experimentally know; and probably, when you may again be settled in a *kind* of stationary dwelling, your avocations will be multiplied for the Lord; but, when you *can*, *do* write; it seems to me very long since we had any tidings of you or your movements; but I trust you are ever dear to me, and as manifestly dear to Jesus and His faithful care.

Now I must tell you of the liberality of ——. The bishop purposes to preach here next Sunday morning, in behalf of our National School. In consequence, Mr. C—— has had bills printed, as is usual, to give the notice, and added to them an earnest request that the people interested for the schools would attend, and endeavour to prevent the agitation of the question, whether to *discontinue* the *girls'* school? He, reading this, comes forward in the kindest way and in the most liberal expression, and has given Mr. C—— £25. for the girls (national) school. You will be glad with us, for the sake of the dear children, and because

your friend has been instrumental in this way to furnish the probable power of continuing the school, at least two years longer. It will not surprise you, for you know his character. . . . Your dear classes of children will, I trust, go on well; they attend as you wish, and evince an affectionate remembrance of you, which is, in some at least, associated with the highest and best interests.

We have had many deaths—some of an affecting description. We have also had an unusual flow of people from Harrogate, and some who seem in the best sense to be *living*. I miss you very tenderly, and look at your empty chair with many feelings, and not without a hope that the Lord may be pleased, should we live and all things remain favourable for our continued fellowship in the way we have possessed it, that you may yet come again!—but if not, we traverse a wilderness-world only for a little while, and soon shall rest in a home which will perfect us in all that can be good. O may we never rest short of the fervent longings that animate the soul where Jesus' presence is known in power; but, bounding over every consideration which belongs to this life, enter by faith beyond the veil! All here send kisses and love and tenderest remembrances.

Farewell, my dearest friend. Believe me, in the faithful sympathy of friend and sister, ever yours,

M. S.

CXXXII.

Family of God—Fifth of November—Churches—Two Deaths.

YOUR dear letter has been more than once the subject of great refreshment to me, my beloved friend; in many ways it cheers me. It is a comfort that you feel satisfied about our visit to London, and it is a delight to realize also how we are both privileged to drink of the living water flowing from our living rock.

I have been waiting to reply to yours some weeks past; but this season, as you know, is particularly busy, so many unusual engagements and works that belong to the period press for attention. At this moment I am so far laid up as to be kept from such engagements as want the *foot*; but as I am at Knaresborough, I am still constantly occupied, my friends seeming to think it a good opportunity for private and social intercourse—and so it is. My sprain is better; it has been a very severe one, but I hope by next Sunday I shall be enabled to walk. How instructive these visitations are, my beloved friend,—how needful *every* member for the well-being and comfort of the body, and how sweet a lesson is presented herein, teaching us the nature of that sympathy, which should abound in the family of God. May that Holy Spirit, who is the life of holy sympathy such as animates the mystical body, more energetically impart the blessing, and give visible proof to all, that Christ's Beloved is *but one*, the only one—the choice one of her that bore him;—as the scripture says,—queens and concubines would then be constrained to praise her.

This reminds me of one of your questions, my be-

loved friend, which respects the observance of the fifth of November. As it is a service appointed for thanksgiving to God for a mercy most wonderful, and by which the interests most dear to us have been preserved to our nation, surely it calls for the grateful expression of our acquiescence; and where there is power to attend, it seems only in obedience to the command that we should do so. "Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake;" and were we more alive to the privilege of drawing near to God, and more sensible of the importance of the *Protestant* faith, there would, I believe, be a more general observance of the day. With what warm and lively feeling would our forefathers hasten to the courts of the Lord, whilst the wonderful goodness of the Lord was immediately before them, and how unfeigned would be the tribute rising up from the lip and heart of every lover of truth. Alas, my friend, we are at all times too apt to retain those energies only so long as somewhat of novelty attaches to them, and then to sink into mere formality; finally falling into total disuse of what once was considered important and blessed. In this day there is likewise the additional evils of *the times*; which is an *indifference to essential distinctions* in religion, which paves the way for the more fearful development of the final horrible conspiracy against the Lord's anointed. The enemy, by subtlety or sophistry being intent, in the first place, on *removing barriers*—that in the second place he may more successfully pour forth the flood of infidelity without obstruction: therefore my opinion is, we should seek rather to strengthen every recollection by which we may be armed against the deadly effects of *this day's* boasted liberality and licentious independence of instituted means.

I do not exactly understand the quotation you give me from Mr. H——'s works, not knowing in what

connection it stands in his book. Certainly no *church* is addressed *as exclusively spiritual*; the several plantations established through apostolic labours are called *churches*, and one had no right to lord it above another. The sin of Rome is, that she claims exclusive privilege, not only having departed from that faith which constitutes a true *church*, but arrogantly pretending to exclusive rights. That there is only *one spiritual church*, formed out of the true members of *every visible church*, is unquestionable; for Jesus gathered to himself out of *every kindred, &c.*; and there is but one faith, one baptism, one Lord. The apostolic salutations were addressed to saints in the churches; and yet not to saints only, for sinners of every description are also addressed.

I never liked writing in the magazine, because it is not the kind of publication that suits my *calling*, as *I* think; and I suppose my own style to be too grave for such publications. I embraced the invitation of the year's experiment,—being not willing to decline anything that seemed to come as an opening for good, and therefore overcame my own reluctance,—at which time I intended to decline, unless further directed in the Lord's mind.

The funeral bell is going for that dear precious child of God, —. You will have heard of his departure, for no doubt M. M. will have been informed. His body will be lodged in the grave in a few more minutes. His death has been very affecting to me. He grew up as a child in a very regular attendance on the instructions in my class, but as he advanced in years, seemed to grow cold and indifferent to spiritual things, till about three years since, when the Spirit blew upon the materials laid up in his understanding, and a fire broke forth. It has continued to burn with purifying power in the inward man, although without much display, yet with very lovely evidence in a holy devoted life. He wen

to L—— for a season, where the beginning of his last illness was formed. Disgusted with the scenes of sin and tumult he there witnessed, he confined himself too much to the house, and when he came back to remain here, as he anticipated, he was evidently in bad health. He had often come over for the refreshment of the Sunday, and returned on Monday. On the last return he came up to me after meeting, and said, "O I am so glad to get back, now I shall once more feed in my dear pastures." He was taken ill the next day, and never again left his room. Dear young man, his sickness, though short, has been rich in experience and evidence. His views of justification were delightful, his peace uninterrupted, his spirit calm and holy. The last time I saw him I said, "M——, do you think this is a call to depart?" He answered, "No, I do not feel in my body as if I should die this time; I have no pain." "Do you then understand the voice of the visitation?" "Yes, it refines me, and I think is very chiefly sent for the benefit of my family." "But suppose it is to depart, how then do you feel disposed in mind?" He turned his eyes upon me, raising his head a little from the pillow, and with a sweet smile said, "O it is my blest release! What have I waited for? what do *you* wait for? It is like the bird let loose from the cage; we have prayed for it, O it is my *blest release*." He said these words with precious emphasis. These, amongst many other peculiar sentences, are dear demonstrations of the victory of Christ in and for his members. He departed in the same frame, breathing out his soul with "Jesus is my Saviour."

A few hours after his release, J. P—— left this vale of tears to ascend to the same glorious world of joy. Perhaps you did not know him: he was a scholar long since, and possessed a great store of knowledge, which alas he did not improve to Christ's glory. He was wild

and vagrant; his history has been one of sin and misery, followed after every scene of rebellion with pangs and reproofs from the grieved Spirit;—he reduced himself to beggary; but like the Prodigal, has been brought home: he died at length in the workhouse, but has given proof of his restoration to the Lord two years, during which time he has been in body sick, recovering again from time to time. His experience has been very instructive; no doubt of the application of the effectual Covenant, but much of heart-rending distress;—all however, ere he died, hushed into peace. The difference in these two has been striking; whilst the similarity of faith, and the oneness of the foundation, has also been conspicuous. How nearly together would they pass into the presence of the Lord—each justified, atoned for, saved—in the same Jesus! but according to what they had *sowed* in respect of personal experience *reaping* here below. O may these testimonies fall upon our softened hearts, and quicken us increasingly in sowing to the Spirit!

I rejoice, my precious friend, in all your communications, although I have so filled my paper as to leave little room to express them. Continue to write, and tell us all your interests, for they are dear to us. May the Lord prosper the ministry he shall appoint to you! and may he prosper your district also, and may he fill the sails of the vessel, and bring your dear one with prospering winds! God bless you for ever in all the riches of his love. None of mine are here with me, but all love you, and would send love were they here; accept it therefore in tenderness. We shall lose our curate, he thinks the air disagrees, and he will be better to go. *We are in peace* for all time.

Ever yours in the precious bonds,
M. S.

CXXXIII.

*Afflicted Party—Privilege of Sickness—Lambs of the Fold—God's Sovereignty
—Views of Men—Death.*

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

ALL the little heads of communications contained in your letter are deeply interesting to me, and bring before me those dear ones who long since engaged my affection. May we not, in these instances of the Lord's operations, see the wisdom and grace that abounds towards his people? The pathway in which he appears to be dealing out sanctified trial to —, is much to be admired; and the meek acceptance of affliction is a manifestation of what the Lord can effect in vessels of mercy. Surely the trial is great, yet the strength is greater. My affectionate sympathy is with the dear party, and my supplication that whatever shall most conduce to the true riches and happiness of each, may be given!

We are *here* all at present in a state of sickness, from which scarcely a house is free. I have been laid up during the last fortnight, and am still an invalid in my room, and every member of the family has had the same complaint, although in different degrees. But mercy abounds, and in sickness there is so much of precious holy leisure for the soul's exercises in its highest pleasures, that we number it amidst our privileges. It is indeed a trial of faith in respect of the *lambs* of the fold, since I know that regularity with young ones is so important; but even herein we are taught to bear in mind that He who is never sick, and is never absent, is the *Shepherd*, and will carry them in his bosom! O how settling and soothing is the doctrine of God's sovereignty and unchangeableness, when applied to

the various circumstances that would otherwise agitate and distress the mind ; for being able to commit *all* to Him, in this character, we cease from anxiety, and leave results unto Him. This is a favourite reflection with me in respect of the gathering clouds that darken the political horizon, and that, alas ! obscure the glory of the church. We know that these storms *are* to blow, and that they precede the bursting of that day which will be without storm ; and we know also that our Lord sitteth upon the heavens, and ruleth the winds and clouds. It would be inconsistent therefore to *fear*,—God grant that on the contrary our hope and joy may be in proportion to the apparent approach of the Lord ; so that, standing upon the summit of our towering Rock, we may be unmoved and strong.

I have not seen the work to which you refer, but will endeavour to obtain it. It is refreshing to meditate upon the great theme ; and the opening views of men are helps, so long as we do not take up their opinions apart from our dependance upon the Spirit. That the coming of the Lord draweth nigh we must needs believe, when we compare the tokens laid down in scripture with those existing around us. The precise period, we are expressly told, is *not* to be revealed unto men—our part is to watch, and be looking out, and patiently to wait. Come when He will, I trust He shall receive from us the hearty welcome, our voices rising amidst the Hallelujahs of the blessed, to hail Him our God and King !

Your mention of — must not be passed by unnoticed. I enter into your christian desires, but difficulties attend this matter, and I have taken some circumstances as indications from the Lord that this is not a question in which I am concerned. The public means, acquaintance with —, and Mr. —'s pastoral feeling are open and sufficient.

Yes, Eliza W—— is departed—very unexpectedly ; she caught cold, it fell on her lungs, and she rapidly wasted ; her death was triumphant. Maria and I were with her—she breathed out her soul in my arms, and into the bosom of Jesus !

Our work in the blessed vineyard is as usual ; blessed be our God, he upholds us, and notwithstanding exhaustion of the mortal part, forgets not his promise ; strength for the day is given, whether it be to labour or to suffer, and Jesus Christ is increasingly dear. O blessed hour ! which will complete the time of sojourning here, and give us all into the regions within the veil !

We are to have our nephew F—— as assistant curate, please God, in place of Mr. ——, who has obtained an appointment elsewhere. By this means we are in *family* association—very interesting to us ; he is a diligent worker in schools, and a great help in my evening one. We shall see what the Lord may intend.

My beloved friend, yours in the sweet bonds of Christ,
M. S.

CXXXIV.

Unsettled Abode—Disappointment—Variety in Opinions—Second Advent—Assurances—Signs—Speculation.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

LONG indeed it is since my pen addressed you, but you will not accuse my heart of silence ; and were you here, dear friend, at this time, you would not, I think, retain one shadow of displeasure on your brow. That I carry you in the sweetest love of my heart, you know ; a love

that is prayerful and abiding. . . . In the midst of all, many tender thoughts embrace your interests. I think upon your pathway, and I supplicate the Lord to shower blessings upon it perpetually. You have had in some degree an *unsettled* sort of abiding-place lately. This is not agreeable to the christian, whose purpose is to stay quietly in one place of sojourning ; but if the Lord appoints it otherwise, we may be persuaded of good. Perhaps, too, I speak as influenced by my own disposition, which likes a settled place for labour. All, however, is well with us when we follow the pillar and cloud, in whatever direction it may move. How peculiar and precious is such a privileged existence as is here implied ! O may we always know, that in following Jesus we have not only safety but joy.

I had a hope that you might have been directed this way, but it is now withdrawn : perhaps it might not have proved so spiritually advantageous in all its bearings as our short-sightedness would have calculated. Thus I reason upon premises, on which I would place the calculation for spiritual things as chiefest, whilst at the same time there is a disappointment of *affection* by the conclusion thus drawn. I trust, however, you will be brought here for a refreshing salutation.

I have had a letter which gives a very welcome little history of your dear — as a great blessing to many English people—describing their mode of spending the Lord's day; all highly comforting to us who have longed for her in the Lord, and to whom our dear and gracious Lord has given such rich increase of grace. May he increase *your* consolation, by raising up all you love as monuments of His glory.

I do not make out the name of the writer on prophecy of whose opinion you ask mine, but it is enough

to say, whoever it may be, I have *not* read the work. I have not a moment for any reading except my Bible. The thoughts he has proposed are not new. Many persons, I believe, hold his idea of the whole period; considering the millennium, the judgment, the new heaven, &c., just as you state he does. Of course there will be, until the appearance of our Lord shall settle all differences, a variety in the view men take of *particulars* belonging to that glorious period; but as yet I have seen no reason to change my own expectation—and I confess I am not at all anxious about *this* part of the subject—I think we are *tempted* when we try to go beyond what is written, and that in order to establish a *scheme*, and produce what *we* call a harmonious plan, we may be in danger of adding to or taking from what is written.

Had it been necessary or desirable that believers should be possessed of all the minutiae of the wonderful reign before us, no doubt the Holy Ghost would have *revealed* to us all, but it has not pleased Him so to do. It is quite enough, I presume, for us to know *what is written*, and thereby to have such knowledge of the glory of Christ as exalts him in the heart, in the first place, and leads us onwards into the understanding of his *covenant* relation to the *earth*, and for his redeemed, to be manifested in his second advent and *visible triumph* over whatever Satan and sin have wrought in this world. *Some* blissful particulars, some refreshing assurances, stand legibly and prominently forth in the word of God. Our *signs* also we must know, and our expectant attitude we must maintain. Let it be so with us, and we shall have revealed to us *all* that is desirable.

I am *afraid* of speculation; the mind gets *anxious* and often the truth itself is darkened, to the feeble or the

prejudiced, by man's endeavour to bring forth light. I know we are of one mind, my dear friend, and that we are satisfied in the blessed experience of a kingdom *within* us, full of the ardent character which looks for its perfection when Jesus comes again, and rejoices to believe that this his coming *is even at the door*.

M. S.

CXXXV.

Sympathy with the Afflicted on the Death of a young Disciple—Reunion—Proportionate Bliss—Delight in Labour.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

MY sister's letter would cross yours on the road, and in some measure account for the long silence of which you affectionately complain ; and I might deem it unnecessary to write so immediately after her, had not your dear letter called forth all the sympathy of my heart, and bid me hasten some part of what I feel. I had no idea the sweet departed — was so near her rest : having known that she was delicate, and that her friends anticipated her early departure, I am not surprised at the *event* ; but it having occurred so soon is a matter of surprise,—O blessed be God, not of sorrow, on her behalf; for she is beyond the reach of trouble now, and is in the enjoyment of that presence into which we long to come—and the words of our Lord to his sorrowing disciples are appropriate in her case, “ If ye loved me ye would rejoice.” It is difficult to climb so high upon the mount as to leave the dark and damp clouds beneath our feet; and tears will flow when our dear ones are torn from our sight ; but we do not weep as others do who

have no faith or hope ; and the chastened tears of you all, my beloved friends, will, I know, fall with submission and thankfulness for the sweet evidence the dear child has left behind.

I have frequently thought that, lovely and loved as she was, the dispensation to her of an early removal from temptation and trial was peculiarly gracious. I remember when she was quite a little one, looking at her with a mixture of *painful* love : she was so engaging, and seemed to have a disposition that might expose her to much sorrow of heart ; but now her Shepherd has gently withdrawn her from the scenes of affliction, and sheltered his dear lamb in the fold where no rough wind can blow.

I need not say to you, my friend,—let this reflection comfort you. Your own faith has already realized all these consolations, and your dear letter breathes the spirit of acquiescing love of the divine will. A parent's heart has a deeper wound, and yet there is no wound which the healings of Jesus' love cannot reach ; and I trust our dear one and the child's dear father also will receive this balm,—none other can truly assuage grief such as theirs. Tell my dear friend how my whole heart is touched for her, and that my prayerful entreaty to the Lord is for her support ; trusting too that this affliction will be sanctified to produce increase in meetness for the reunion with the blessed which awaits the blood-bought family. It is lawful to anticipate re-union with those with whom we have been united on earth in the bonds of Jesus ; for while we say, “ Whom have I in heaven but thee,” it is nevertheless evident that the hope of joining our dear ones in celebrating Jesus' praise is accounted a legitimate and holy desire—thus we are said to sorrow, but with hope ; believing that when our Lord returns he will bring his saints with him.

I thank you, my beloved friend, for giving in such a detail of dear E——'s frame of mind, and of her last moments ; it is all deeply interesting to us, both on her own account, and in connection with our heart's affections for you all. May we stand ready, having our hearts weaned from this beggarly world, which is not only itself poor, but which so awfully impoverishes the souls which are allured or beguiled by its subtleties. It is our privilege as believers to be in the world as our Lord was, and thus to assure our heart before him ; and while we are anticipating present life or death, sure I am that there is no enjoyment equal to that which close fellowship with Christ affords ; and that his own people have their portion of bliss, in their *way*, and at its *close*, proportionably to their conscious intimacy with their soul's Beloved. We know it, my friend. O may we increasingly live according to what we so know !

We have been brought by our Lord to very near views of the eternal world through sicknesses also ; but these are welcome memorials of the Lord's intention ere long to take down the earthly tabernacle ;—not that I could call it *welcome* in any other sense than as it is far better to depart and be with Christ, *individually* considered : for the relative interests that are connected with our continuance here I feel an increasing claim, and the delight of labouring increases with the labour. It is well for us that the determination of this great and important point rests not with us ; we are in the bosom of Him who will prolong or cut short our pilgrimage in *love*—and that is enough for us. Farewell, beloved friend, with tenderest affection I bear you in my heart ; never can we forget the nature and the strength of that bond which first brought us together, and which is strengthened by time. Eternity will soon give it all its practical energy, and we shall joy before our God for ever !

M. S.

CXXXVI.

Renewed Sympathy on a second Bereavement—Elevation above the World—Desired Inscription—Christian Standard and Rule—Increase of Schools—Ministry.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I HAVE been much with you in spirit, under all the late affecting dispensation, by which you have been both afflicted and comforted; and my sympathy, my dear friend, has, I trust, been expressed in the best way,—praying that the lovely examples of dying triumphs, presented in the precious souls that are now in the presence of Jesus above, may bring forth fruit in us who remain! There is no room for regrets or griefs respecting the dear ones; their own longings have been satisfied, and their pains are all past; and never could we have more striking evidence given of the victory of Jesus in and for His own, than these have afforded. The precious little E—— was gathered as a lily prepared for a more congenial atmosphere than this wilderness-world; and when I call to mind her lovely exterior, and think of the perils to which she would have been exposed, if growing still amongst the thorns, I do see such abundant grace in her conversion, and goodness in her removal, that it looks only like a singular dispensation of mercy, notwithstanding the anguish which I full well know a mother's heart must feel in the parting stroke! Dear A—— has been ripening under the beams of the Sun of Righteousness,—how then can we complain when the hand of love has gathered him and taken him home! I know the dear parents and the beloved friends of those favoured ones think as I am speaking, and I trust that the healing

balm of Jesus' peace is plenteously poured into their hearts' wounds—then all is well.

How vain and empty, my dear friend, do all the blandishments and reasonings of this trifling world appear, when such scenes are realized. Truly it is good to go to the house of mourning—and good to visit it frequently, in the exercise of our minds. It is difficult, even when in the act of contemplating the dying and the dead, to *believe* that *we are* dying and shall soon be dead; but were we to constrain our thoughts occasionally, at least, to dwell upon this truth, we should probably be quickened to more lively disdain of the toys of this world, and to more believing elevation above its cares. It is a great thing to live in the Spirit, and always so to bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body; and this cannot be attained without the resolute watchings to which we are naturally very much indisposed. O may the Spirit of power and might invest us with this privileged existence, so that living or dying we may bear about with us our proper inscription—a memorial written upon our foreheads—"Holiness to the Lord!" And again I would say, may the victorious deaths of the beloved E—— and A—— be towards us all as a voice of the Lord,—then we shall say, "To live is Christ—to die is gain."

The little memorial has been very interesting to our young ones. In itself it is deeply so, and many to whom I related the circumstances felt a double interest in them, on account of the connection with your own dear name; for it is borne by many here in affectionate remembrance.

* * * * *

It cannot be comfortable to find ourselves in close association with uncongenial tastes and pursuits, neither

friend, is all that remains, I believe, of the late attack; therefore be not uneasy, and offer the tribute cheerfully which gives praise to our God in whatever He does.

Sweet is this season to me, and sweet also will be the return to labour when our Lord shall so ordain. I anticipate that *possibly* I may have a meeting even next Sunday: although all my dear friends say I had better remain quiet another week, I shall be governed by what I may feel when the day comes. But your spirit will be in dear fellowship with mine, whether it may be in solitude or in the meeting. How much I love you, and how dear the holy communion of soul that we thus possess is to me, can only be known when we are liberated from all the incumbrances of earth, and rise into the presence of our God. The nearer we approach to that final vision, so much the more do we feel as if breathing in the pure, the delightful atmosphere; and I must needs in proportion love you, my sister spirit, seeing we have been privileged so peculiarly to taste of great spiritual union. The God of all our mercies, and of all our joys, be with your spirit, my friend, in the power of His own presence. And oh, may we feel the creative broodings of that presence overshadowing our whole inward man, and producing a glorious increase of all that is light and life!

I read your dear thoughts as they flow to me through your pen with ever fresh delight; and it seems to me that thus the Lord is answering the present desires of the soul, and bringing us mutually, as helps to each other, into the green pastures that touch upon the Eden above. How truly do we realize the typical history of Israel—how faithfully does the Lord divide all our Jordans of difficulty, and bring us into the plentiful promise! And O how rich are those well-watered scenes where we lie down none afraid, and

CXXXVII.

Exhortation to Peace—Divine Broodings—History of Israel—Hymn—Family Allusions.

MY OWN BELOVED FRIEND,

THE tender words written in your last, and running thus:—"Do not let me hear of your illness by accident," have been continually sounding in my ears, as whispered by a monitor to whom I affectionately and readily yield obedience. Although at the present that dear Lord of our hearts seems raising me up again to new prospects of work, it may be that some circumstance might convey to you what *has* been, and so trouble that dear bosom in which I earnestly desire that nothing may be known but the triumphant effect of Jesus' words, saying, "Peace be still." There may He ever reign with His all-assuaging love and grace, and hush every emotion to rest in His own precious bosom, by bearing you there in eternal tenderness! Oh! His is a communicative tenderness, never failing—never to be exhausted!

I have been ill, as it respects the mortal part—I usually suffer a degree of debility in the fall and spring of the year, and this has been my feeling some time. A few weeks since, just before going up to my room for the meeting, I was seized with sickness and much pain and brought home, where I have remained ever since—during the first week, passing through much pain and violent discipline of medicine, as it was apprehended there was an affection of the liver. This seems passed away; but I am weakened, and have headaches, and am necessitated to nurse a little. This, however, my beloved

we think upon Him who has sought that which was driven away, has healed that which was sick, and has recovered us out of the places wherein we were scattered "in the dark and cloudy day!" Surely *love* is a blessed productive principle—how does it teem with enjoyment and constrain to devotion! We can know what David's loving heart meant when he exclaimed, "What shall I render to the Lord for all the benefits that He hath done me," and when he gave the sacred charge, "*Bless thou the Lord, O my soul!*" Trials, my beloved one, of course we have; but do not the dark clouds rather serve to brighten the beauty of the lighter sky? and are we not even by our sorrows rendered more really happy? It is so when in the dreary scenes of *nature* we pass to the consideration of the purchased inheritance in Christ.

My heart is gratified, and I believe my mouth would literally smile when I read your direction to turn to the hymn, "Ah! shepherd of Israel." You did not know that it was my special favourite, and that it has been a companion to me many days and in many different kinds of experience. To hang on a crucified God, to hide in the clefts of the rock, to rise and be hid in His breast, to dwell on the Calvary where love is thus exhibited to view, and to suffer and triumph with Him—are suitable privileges to the heart that loves; or, if He will have it so, to lie at the *foot* of the rock—this is bliss! And thus we may realize our own desires through the whole. Let us just now pause and ask, in which of these situations am I at this moment? And oh! let us not part from our present reference to the hymn without together blessing Him that we are *eternally* held in His heart.

No, my dear friend, we were not brought up "in showers and dews;" we were privileged as it respects

both the world and what nature might prize

balm of Jesus' peace is plenteously poured into their hearts' wounds—then all is well.

How vain and empty, my dear friend, do all the blandishments and reasonings of this trifling world appear, when such scenes are realized. Truly it is good to go to the house of mourning—and good to visit it frequently, in the exercise of our minds. It is difficult, even when in the act of contemplating the dying and the dead, to *believe* that *we are* dying and shall soon be dead ; but were we to constrain our thoughts occasionally, at least, to dwell upon this truth, we should probably be quickened to more lively disdain of the toys of this world, and to more believing elevation above its cares. It is a great thing to live in the Spirit, and always so to bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body ; and this cannot be attained without the resolute watchings to which we are naturally very much indisposed. O may the Spirit of power and might invest us with this privileged existence, so that living or dying we may bear about with us our proper inscription—a memorial written upon our foreheads—“ Holiness to the Lord ! ” And again I would say, may the victorious deaths of the beloved E—— and A—— be towards us all as a voice of the Lord,—then we shall say, “ To live is Christ—to die is gain.”

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It cannot be comfortable to find ourselves in close association with uncongenial tastes and pursuits, neither

is it favourable in its bearings upon the cause of Christ. You have always had the same views with us respecting the standard of christian conduct to be maintained, and I trust we shall none of us ever consent to lower its requirements ; and, thanks be to our eternal Friend, our *affections* cannot *consent*, although they may be solicited, to adopt as our rule any conformity to the maxims of this evil world. The rule is given—“ Come out and be separate ; touch not the unclean thing ; ” and the Divine love has been shed abroad in our hearts, so that we would walk according to this rule.

Our own dear vineyard occupies us much at present, from the increase of schools ; as also from the remarkable spirit of enquiry that prevails with numbers who have been hitherto as settled as the dead sea ! It is surprising to see these troubled and anxious ; and very surprising also, without any *visible* cause to be assigned, that where prejudices were strong and obstinate they cease to exist,—perhaps our Lord is graciously affording this final seal to his appointed ministrations in this place, and is giving to His labouring servants the comfort of a parting blessing. Yet we may still have lengthened years of working-time. If it is the Lord’s will, be it so ; there cannot be any service so sweet ; and as resting-time will come, we may contentedly wait and work.

How are you circumstanced at present, my dear friend ? Are you still favoured with the clear sound ? It seems very long since I heard any word from you as to these matters, and perhaps you have still the same ministry.

M—— is just come in, and desires I will give her very affectionate love, and many thanks for the *weed* you kindly sent her, which she received in safety. She is wonderfully supported, for her application to the

schools is unceasing and arduous ; but she is upheld by everlasting Arms, and is one of the proofs that divine strength is perfected in human weakness. Her schools are very nicely organized at present, and arranged in the several *kinds* very wisely—and she has some able and diligent workers from the girls who are grown up in the school ; and, blessed be God, has now out in highly responsible situations a vast number, of whom their employers write from year to year that they deem them a blessing in their household. No girls are *recommended* by us, of whom we have not good hope. There are here and there some in the neighbourhood who, as *Sunday* scholars have attended, and some also of the *Sunday* ones who have been dismissed, from not being approved, who have nevertheless reported themselves as having been *brought up*, as they term it, in Miss S——'s school. One of this description is, I believe, now in Mr. ——'s household—one *we* would not have recommended. But let our eye be single—the work is the Lord's—the welcome smile is from Him, and workers must, like their Master, go through evil as well as good report !

All is well! God bless you, my dear friend. May every best blessing be ever yours. I am yours in the dear bonds,

M. S.

CXXXVII.

Exhortation to Peace—Divine Broodings—History of Israel—Hymn—Family Allusions.

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No, my dear friend, we were not brought up “in showers and dews:” we were privileged as it respects what the world estimates, and what nature might prize,

a father eminent in talent, excellent in principle, and solicitous for our good, but with this, a proud sense of honour, high scheme of morality, and a degree of reverence for religion that in his first days seemed only to put his soul further from the humbling way—a mother equally influenced by what she supposed good, but these were not *favourable* circumstances; for, of course, the world was not renounced. But God will have His own wherever they are. Afflictions one after another blighted the gourds my dear parents sought to delight in; bodily sufferings, peculiarly great, also rested upon my beloved father. I was his pet, his joy, during the last scenes with him also, and by his dying bed: he ripened under sorrow and triumphed in Him who is the repairer of every breach. My mother outlived him, and longer resisted the Lord; her high spirit did not readily bend; but by an invisible power that invincibly contended with her, it was broken at length through very afflictive experiences; first, in her resentment of our views and walk—then, in the prostration of painful experience! She died, my dear friend, by a stroke. It was a deep affliction; but, blessed be God, softened to us by the manifest previous change in her soul. Those were scenes of indescribable trial, especially such distress as arose out of the opposition to the cross; but they were blessed to my dear sister and to myself, in trying us and bringing out simplicity and resolution. My own lot, my dear friend, has been one of peculiar sorrow; suffice it to say, that the sorrow contained in it God's own purpose, and came as the channel of conveyance through which Jesus entered my heart. This little sketch answers some of your affectionate enquiries, and will help you to place us before you in your *mind's eye*. The Lord bring you in His due time, my friend, that we may see each other face to face.

M. S.

CXXXVIII.

Incidental Interruptions—Strength for the Day—The Spirit's Dispensations—Various Effects of Alarms—Tract.

VERY precious and sweet are all your dear communications to me, my own beloved friend ;—they are sweet, as coming to me laden with the testimony of the Name we love, and they must, in this blessed fulness, be *precious* ; for all that savours of Jesus is costly in our hearts. I have been very intimately with you of late, notwithstanding the unusual length of time that has been allowed to pass without an expression of this affection to yourself. This you will have been assured of, yet I would tell you some of the causes of this silence.

In the first place, when your packet arrived I was still suffering much langour and bodily inability for the work, which probably I resumed a little too soon. I was not therefore able to do more than the stated meetings. In the next place, my sweet M—— fell into great weakness of body, just at the period when more than common exertion was required in her school ; and the little I could do for her help was needful to her. This brought us to the time when I anticipated the delight of seeing you face to face ; for the hint in your letter did not escape my notice, and I looked for the “long days” with holy expectation that our long-desired interview might be given. A providential call obliged me, in the midst of this waiting, to leave home ; and although in this especial season, when I never willingly quit the place, yet I was compelled to be absent a fortnight ; and since my return I have been looking for the publication of my little book, hoping to make it the companion of my letter to you ; and now con-

strained by the love of my heart, and beginning to fear that some solicitude will arise in yours respecting me, I begin to tell you once more something of the life of my soul, and to appeal to the same eternal life in yours. Thus, my beloved friend, may we ever exchange our thoughts and feelings with the witness of the Comforter ever in us.

How abundant is the loving-kindness of our Lord during this awful day of controversy with the nations. We are now made experimentally to feel the blessedness of our provided rest as a place of safety in every description of tribulation. Although we mark with awe the tokens of indignation and wrath which He is pleased to give forth, our hearts are beating with loving desire and hope, for we know He is in the storm, as the Ruler, Lord and Saviour, and are sure that the full proportion of strength shall be given to the redeemed for any and every day wherein the Redeemer worketh. Thus comforted and relieved we look out for the morning. Times such as these serve greatly to demonstrate the difference between such as know the Lord and such as know him not. Already the prophetic voice seems fulfilled, "and we discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." Oh! how unspeakable are the distinctions and the joys of the sealed, and how sure the inheritance in our souls' beloved! Situated as we are, much opportunity is afforded me for the cheering view of the manner in which the Holy Spirit is sanctifying the dispensations of God's rule. Many pilgrims bend their steps to my little retreat, who come from places very widely separated, but in whom the same mighty operation is discoverable; and it is very interesting to find how, according to the degree of experience that exists in the Spirit's application of the judgments that

are abroad in the earth, they work either diligence, penitence, confidence or hope, correspondently with the subject under His hand, and causing all to unite together in increased simplicity and love. I mention this for our mutual joy ; we gladly take the cordial cup that is thus put into our hand ; and while many are fluent in discussing the terrors of the times, we will seek to have our tongue loosed to testify what the Psalmist thus expresses—“that thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare ;” and we will also add—“Unto thee, O Lord ! do we give thanks—unto thee do we give thanks.”

Your little tract is deeply interesting to me, not only as presenting a nosegay of sweet flowers culled out of the Eden of our Lord, but as affording me much of the history of your own feelings—making it to bear upon the *times*, as calling upon men to consider their ways and their state.

I think, too, that seeing, as in respect of teachers, we are in the circumstances of having many fearfully deluded leaders who beguile unstable souls, that were the tract printed in such a form as would suit the times, a few scriptures relative to the necessity of “taking heed what we hear” might profitably be added. Our Lord will determine your judgment in this respect, and will also guide you in whatever belongs to that labor of love after which your dear soul is pressing. Do not yield to temptations which would hold you back from making attempts in this way. I love your humble dependance and your waiting spirit, and it is a privilege thus to stand in the attitude of readiness before the Lord ; but when He has given His message, it is then time to hasten to deliver it, and to remember how all its results are with Him.

He is undoubtedly pouring His testimony into your own bosom, and there are many things belonging to you

and your experience which lead me to think that already you have *received* enough to constitute you a *giver*. I know, my beloved friend, that this is admitted, and that you *are* giving in the little circle wherein you move; but I specially refer to your *writings*. God Almighty anoint you more and more, and give you the sure hope of prosperity in this part of service! But, even if not possessed of a lively anticipation, let us recollect the blessing that does assuredly remain for such as sow beside "all waters," or "cast their bread thereon." I shall rejoice to see you thus occupied; and I have been thinking lately that, through the Tract Society, you might find a medium for the conveyance of your voice, without the risk of an expence which it would be imprudent to encounter. Time for working is fast expending—O may we give diligence to labour as looking to meet in that home where love will be perfected, and in His presence above to rejoice in a fellowship, so singularly begun and hallowed here below. And if we may be so indulged, O may we also have some interchange of affection face to face, whilst on this side our homes!

Write to me soon, to say how it is with you all.
Farewell, my dear companion in hope!

M. S.

CXXXIX.

Proper Position of the Will—Occupations and Subjects—Service in the Church—Examination of Girls.

I AM taking my pen, my ever-loved friend, with the expectation of doing no more than writing a short letter.

Affection is lively in my heart towards you, and I listen to its voice as it seems to say, "Give these few lines to her to whom they will be assuredly welcome."

My heart is disappointed that we do not meet as we had desired,—yet resigned, not by necessity only, but with a confidence that there is some hidden mercy in the Lord's will. It is not for us at any time either to dictate to our heavenly Father, or to complain when He acts by His own blessed mind. We are quite sure that nothing can be in the purpose of that ever-faithful Lord, but love and bounty to such as live in His bosom. In how many interesting ways has He convinced us of this in what is past! And what food have we through these retrospective thoughts, for the faith which is to be exercised in the present and future! In my own heart, my beloved friend, the Lord has put this strong result of His own decided ways,—He has done what he would!—and He has effected, in some measure at least, the end He has in view,—bringing the will into its proper place, and making it to wait at His feet. Let us cheerfully evince this grace in the present appointment; and believe that whenever it is *really good*, He will give us the comfort we anticipate. Should we not meet here below, we are only to wait a little longer,—the meeting above is prepared for us, and then our fellowship will be indeed pure and exhilarating. I had desired your visit should have been more in the summer than you proposed. A sort of *natural* wish was alive that you might see our little retirement, with its roses, because you have pictured it in your imagination as so adorned; and when they withered away, I said to Maria, "She will not now come to these things." But all these little accompaniments to our feelings serve to add their testimony to the vanity of human thoughts. Blessed then be our God, that, in the midst of all, we have the last-

ing beauties, the sweet flowers of the Covenant; and, whenever or wherever we meet, we shall find an Eden!

You ask to know where I am in the dear work that engages me; and I am glad for you to be in the Spirit with me. You are aware, I believe, that I have not resumed my open meeting on Friday evening, since it was suspended by illness. I have found that in respect of local usefulness it is better to be more in little private meetings in different parts of the town. It gives opportunity for calling on persons who might not be disposed or able to attend the public meetings; and in these social hours I take a passage as it may seem best adapted to the people, and expound it familiarly. This brings us profitably together; and Friday evenings are set apart for this object. On the sweet day of the Lord I am from a quarter before two till three engaged as usual, and am going through the Litany of our church service, shewing each subject in its *Bible* form, and endeavouring to call the attention of persons to what they professedly admit. I consider this a suitable course of subjects for a season of the year when strangers, and alas! many thoughtless ones, are induced to come to the school; and I think the Lord has acknowledged it. Last Sunday I was upon the words, "From lightning and tempest, good Lord deliver us," taking it of course with the manifestation of Christ's rule, not only in present storms, but in the Second Advent tempest. Next Sunday, if the Lord will, from "Plague and pestilence, good Lord deliver us." Next Monday evening it will be the three first verses of the sixth chapter of Isaiah. I am going through that prophetic book on these occasions, and we have advanced thus far. On Sunday evening we have been long engaged in passing through the various titles given to the Holy Ghost. Having concluded these, we examined those given to

Satan ; and now have just begun the titles of sinners. Last week we had that of sluggards, and the next will be debtors. On Sundays I have the boys as usual. On Thursdays we have a service in our church, Mr. C. conducting it in a very interesting way. He first calls us to a hymn and prayer, next he reads perhaps twenty scriptures selected by himself in parallel passages, then takes one of these as the subject for his exposition ; we then part with prayer and a hymn. We find this a very sweet refreshment ; we all assemble in the chancel, which is large, and he sits within the communion rails. It is social and solemn. On Saturdays we have the singing as before. I have not mentioned Wednesday : but you know that it is given to Harrogate claims ; that is, friends from that place.

Lately we have had much additional enjoyment in our interesting, our most precious, and blessed examination of the children in the church ;—three hundred and fifty girls filling the gallery, and repeating, without *one* hesitation, the half of the second part of “Manna.” Were it not seen, it would scarcely be believed (as most people say) that the little ones, not more than four years old, do this. O yes ! it is very interesting to hear their little voices ; not less so to see the elder girls, as old as twenty-three, out of love to their school and to the truth, uniting with them to be so examined. May God preserve our flock in the humility and love that distinguishes it ! The singing too is quite overpowering ; we have some most beautiful voices consecrated to God. On this occasion we had three anthems ; one “The Lord’s Prayer,” another “Hosannah to the Son of David,” and the other “Before Jehovah’s awful throne.” The church was so crowded with parents that every aisle and stair was full. It is an affecting occasion to us ! We are now,

my beloved friend, preparing for a confirmation, to be held here in three weeks. Last Tuesday we had our Jews' meeting.

Thus, my beloved friend, we have the work given, as for each day, and our Master is with us, and His strength manifested in weakness. My letter is not very short, but so it is when heart and hand press; and we are sometimes led out beyond what we thought would be. Give my true and tender love to your beloved ones, and ever bear me in your heart, as I do you in mine. In faithfulness and tender sympathy I am yours in the dearest bonds,

M. S.

CXL.

Divine Appointments—Winter—Events of the World—Days of the Son of Man.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

At this moment I do not possess your last letter with me. I put it in my desk at Knaresborough, and there it now dwells. Its contents, however, are so far present in my heart as to make me feel a tender solicitude for you. You had been ill, and evidently retained the feelings of indisposition when you wrote; this is enough to awaken a holy sympathy in my soul, and to make me desire by this messenger, as I cannot do it personally, to minister out of my affection what it would freely impart of love in the dearest expression of it. May our great Physician put His hand upon you, and give the full restoration, if indeed that may be His blessed will; to this we learn meekly and gratefully to bow, for full well we know that in all things His divine appointments

are regulated for our sanctity. Blessed be His name, that we have no other object in view but the exaltation of our souls' beloved, and that *sanctity* is dear to us on these two accounts,—it glorifies the Author, and it satisfies the appetites of the new creature. Rich has been the dispensation of love to us, my beloved friend, by which we are thus empowered to rise into the government of our Lord, as altogether agreeable to the affections which animate our souls. This is a pledge of what we shall experience, when we pass still higher into vision of the Lord, and understand the glory of His rule in the true light above. Dear, unutterably dear is His way, however, even now ; and with the consciousness of His presence with us we can find the provision of *joy* and *gladness*, even in the midst of nature's distress. This “secret of the Lord” is very wonderful, my friend ! is it not ? And how unceasingly does it unfold itself, and with every fresh expression of its value and glory communicate new delight to the heart wherein it is given !

This I find to be true in an especial degree, under those times of exercise wherein the soul is under great excitement, whether as it respects public or private interests. These are the times wherein the power of the covenant is more than ordinarily made known ; and of course they are privileged and blessed times.

I am now looking forward to some winter days, should the Lord deal in His usual manner with me, wherein the *summer* of the inner man is delightfully formed. I love the retirement of winter—the quiet of what I call our domestic labour, the familiar and social intercourse with the precious poor of the place ; which, in some degree, is unavoidably interrupted when the claim from strangers is more pressing. The Lord, it is true, is equally in all days, and all descriptions of

work entered into for His sake ; yet there are some dearer delights in which the affections are called forth more peculiarly ; and this is experienced by us in the fellowship we have with many that have grown up with our work, and in our hearts, by long association. There is also a special enjoyment arising out of that very appearance of nature which exhibits outward dreariness : the effect, to my mind, is salutary ; it seems to throw reflection so much inwards, and to present so powerful a picture of the fading nature of earthly beauties, and the certain approach of their final withdrawal from us. The influence is strong upon my heart, and my mind seems habited in a frame that accords with the lesson thus taught ; so that I hail the leafless season.

The evergreens of grace are thus seen and contemplated with greater delight. In our hearts, I trust, my beloved friend, the Eternal Spirit maintains an Eden that shall be the Lord's abode. And O may He abide in us, and give tokens of His indwelling and might !

Sad are the signs of our times, as it respects the condition of kingdoms, nations, people, and, alas ! of our own kingdom and people ! I look with a kind of horror at the rapid advances made by our unhappy rulers in the fatal law of expediency, through which we are involved in a connection with powers that the prophetic voice of God dooms to destruction ; and the whole aspect of affairs assumes a melancholy shade, since we broke the national covenant with our God, and left our simplicity for the counsels and devices of men. Our souls may well weep in secret and sigh bitterly for such provocations ; and truly it would seem that we are infatuated as a people, and rushing onwards into the number of those kingdoms upon whom the *stone shall fall*. The Lord be merciful to our land ! and hear the cry of the remnant ! It is affecting to see the forbearing

delay of impending judgment, and how patiently and perseveringly the angels are made still to "hold the winds." But, according to appearances, we may surmise that the sealing-time will soon be past, and the dreadful commission be given through which the last shock of the earthquake, and the sweeping blast of the tempest, will be let loose and commanded to convulse the world. Well—so let it be—if so our God design! Let us be assured of the divine faithfulness. The Lord, the Judge of the whole earth, will do right. And as in the days of Noah, so in the days of the Son of Man, He will provide the ark of safety for His redeemed, and shut them in. Days and seasons have not only their own peculiar marks of trial, but their own peculiar dispensation of mercy, and so likewise have believers their particular duties and responsibilities belonging to their day.

Ours, in the present period, is that of singleness of heart and eye, producing filial confidence, and the manifestations of our joyous expectation, tempered by godly fear. The sound of His chariot wheels is dreadful, for they will crush the adversary; but it is rejoicing, for they will bear His friends to their home. We may therefore joy with His friends, whilst we mourn to think how many will be found madly striving with their Maker, and desperately refusing the yoke of love. Alas! even amidst those who have received the remonstrance and heard the warning voice, such foes will be found!

Let us pray for the outpouring of the Spirit, that there may yet be, as the prophet expresses it, as the "*gleaning of grapes*," or as "*here and there a berry on the outermost branches*," spared by sovereign grace and gathered by the hand of love.

M. S.

CXLI.

Engaged in Removing—Filial Repose—Communications.

I AM truly glad to be able to dispatch a little note from this retreat. I had hoped, my dear brother, that I should have expressed in person all I had to say, but the Lord puts a hindrance. It was my full intention to have called at the Vicarage before I left K——, but after incessant *labour* it was past nine before we could leave the house in a state of preparation, and then only with the idea of returning in the morning; and now the storm makes it impossible for a horse to convey us, and imprudent for us to walk. We are both very far from well, but I trust it will only be a passing indisposition. I mention all this, in order to account for my non-appearance, which believe me is a sorrow to me; but my eyes are unto Him in whom we are sure all things are well.

I look out upon the snowy scene with much thought for the dear travellers. I fear Mrs. —— will be delayed on the road. But we must not admit a *dis-trust*,—He who has been the Pillar and the Cloud so many days of the pilgrimage, will be so to the end; and he loves to try how far we can trust Him with simplicity in times of exercise. By his mercy he shall gather his pleasant fruits, when he so comes into his garden, and shall find that in his child there is a filial repose which accords with his own mind of love. Can we not truly and cheerfully say this, my dear friend?

If you are no better in health, will it not be desirable to put off your lecture? It must be very painful to you to speak so long unless you are quite restored, and

we all think you had better not expose yourself. Notice could be given by employing any one to go to those who are accustomed to attend ;—*pray* do this, rather than venture upon the work, if you are not strong.

I was desired last Monday evening to mention to you ——'s wish to have the sacrament administered to her by *you*. She seemed to be approaching near to her last moments, and had strong feelings of gratitude towards you ; but I did not tell you, because of the impossibility that you should comply. I only now tell you, in the idea that you may be better.

I have had a letter from ——, with the little paper which I enclose ; and what I now quote is addressed to you :—

“ I must send a little request to dear Mr. ——, which I know he will not refuse if in his power to comply. The sweet specimen which the lines in dearest Maria's album present of his taste in poetic composition, leads me to wish he would put this sentiment I transcribe from my notes of a sermon of Mr. H—— into verse. I know he would enter into the idea conveyed to my mind, and a more delightful subject I could not select. If I succeed in my petition, I purpose having it printed for our Continental Society's sale ;—will you tell Mr. —— this, with my affectionate regards.”

I am now bid to hasten my note. Let us bear each other's interests ever before our beloved Lord, and *stay* ourselves upon Him. O how firm is that resting-place !

Farewell, beloved friend and brother ; believe me yours faithfully and affectionately in Jesus' bonds,

M. S.

CXLII.

Invitation declined—Mightiness of Love—Firmest Consolation—Resting Place—Devoted Spirit.

MY BELOVED BROTHER,

I WOULD gladly join your family to dinner, but I can tell you how I feel on this head. Since my cessation from work, at that hour I gave it to the Lord as a sort of covenant-offering to be in prayer, unless He should open to me any way of more express labour. Your heart will therefore understand that my soul is reluctant to interfere with such an interview;—but my soul shall be with you in truest union of wrestling importunity. O may Jesus pour his richly refreshing visitations on yours, my friend, and bless you a thousand fold to others likewise.

Ah, my beloved brother, how mighty is that love of His which leaves us no desire but that He may rule and reign, and which so provides, as it were, a boundary or shore, past which no swelling tumult of natural desires shall prevail. On this shore may all our wishes and hopes sweetly exhaust themselves, like the waves that roll upon the beach! And how sweetly composing is the persuasion that our Lord has *ordained* our term, and that when He has brought us to the last ripening dispensation, He will take us *home*. As to my own feelings upon this subject, I derive my firmest consolation from the abiding truth that all the way is laid and sanctified by covenant love; and therefore, whilst I sometimes have a bounding of heart that would seem ready to pass over even the barrier to the immediate vision of my Lord, my soul cheerfully returns to its tabernacle,

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heaven and join the blessed who testify of Him there!

Farewell, my beloved fellow-pilgrim, the Lord Jesus
bless you ever, and all yours.

Believe me your faithfully affectionate,
M. S.

CXLIII.

Things of Time fluctuate—Delightful Investigation—Favourite Passage—Encouraging Communications.

I RECEIVED your message, my beloved friend, but not until Sunday morning, otherwise I should have written immediately, for I do not like that a *charge* should be against me on *such a score*. The truth is, I did look for your presence during the week, but this was quite unreasonable, considering the cold and cutting winds, and had I properly reflected I should not have wished you to come. I have felt the effects of the change in the weather as to myself, and have in consequence not been so much upon the recovery as before; but this evening I again feel revived. Thus we fluctuate in all things which belong to time. Blessed be our God that in eternal things we are surely anchored. In comparison with these, nothing in this world is of great importance.

How sweet are the pastures through which I am privileged to rove in my present occupation! were it not

for the world's sin, we would find ourselves irresistibly sometimes force

and is made willing to stay. O how sweet will be the song when Jesus is indeed seen, and this time of conflict is exchanged for his fulness of rest! Does not your heart beat, my brother, with mine upon this matter? and are we not agreed that to depart and be with Christ is far better? Do not grieve at my present weakness of body; rather rejoice with me, because as such weakness prevails, better strength is given—the decaying of the outward man is with the renewing of the inward man! These seasons are always very precious to my soul. It is then that I think I have the most tender sense of being laid on Jesus' bosom. O what a resting-place is that, where my weary head and heart have so often been permitted to lay a burden of grief, of sin, of misery; and whence present cordials have been administered for the time of need!

Surely we understand by such experience the *secret* of the Lord. To this place of refuge let us ever hasten. The things of this life are then held in their proper station, and the duties of it also are most cheerfully discharged. I speak out freely what I feel, not merely to tell you what is passing within me, but to *exchange* sentiment in the communion of the Holy Ghost. This is our dear privilege whilst we are travelling to heavenly rest; and I trust that our beloved Lord will ever maintain and increase it in us to the furtherance of our dearest joys.

Let me see you, my dear friend, some time in the week at Stonefall, and let your prayer be offered for me, that so long as my soul is in its earthly house it may be fervently bent upon testifying for Him whom we love. I am desirous to be spent for Jesus, and to close my pilgrimage *running* in the race. I desire to speak also, so long as I can, to the little remnant round me; and then when Jesus calls, O how sweet to wing my way to

cially in what relates to the excellence of his government; and it is blessed to make these testimonies subjects for communion with the Lord. In this way we come to the exercise of that simplicity which is content with all he does. O, my friend, ever let us cherish this antidote to human cares.

I need scarcely tell you that I have thought of you much in the course of these inward spiritual exercises, and that as my spirit is under the sweet influence of the Spirit, my heart rises in supplication that he may in like manner comfort your soul. I trust that he does, and that the temporary clouds which come across your sky are quickly dispersed. The conflicts attendant upon all your late circumstances will but produce more abiding peace, for Jesus will speedily shew how faithfully he is in the midst of the storm, whatever it be. I am very fond of a little passage in the Psalms, "Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds," it has often been a comfort to me when a black cloud has gathered over my head; and I am sure I may add to his praise that it has often been verified to me, the cloud being made to break in blessing. Will it not be thus, dear friend, in the late trials? shall we not still praise Him?

I could comfort you, were you here, by telling you how much it appears from what I have been told to-day that God's word, in your mouth, is making its way, exciting a spirit of *enquiry* amongst persons who have hitherto cared for none of these things—this is a blessing. I feel sure a blessing will be given to you. As to the times and seasons, it is not for us to be anxious to know these; sufficient it is for us to be anxious

CXLIV.

Enquiry with Submission—Sole Distinction—Blessings implored.

THANK you, beloved friend, for your welcome note. I feel as you do respecting the visitation of sickness which has laid me aside. I am quite in a state of preparation for some further development of the Lord's mind upon these interesting questions, and am content to wait the time and way ; it is enough for me to feel my Lord's support, and to hear him sweetly whispering in his still voice to my recumbent soul. As to the confused noise that arises from the mixed voices of men, *we* have nothing to do with them. The language of our hearts, my brother, is, “Lord, what wouldest *thou* have me to do ?” We speak it unfeignedly, therefore, be the answer what it may, it startles not. If to enter the Red Sea—if to go down into Gethsemane—if to inhabit a desert—or if to dwell in the midst of scorpions,—is He with us ? Then welcome any determination he may make, for he has said, “*I will uphold thee !*”

Through innumerable distresses he has been faithful to me, why should I ever dispute his love ? He who has had mercy and power enough to make him cherish such a poor worthless sinner so long, will never put me from his breast. And truly, my dear friend, so long as I have that dear resting-place, I ask no other distinction or joy. How precious are these possessions !—all is inheritance too !—through blood !—all my future steps are left with our Lord. To become “as a dead man out of mind ” is no trouble, if our names are enrolled above,—or to be strengthened for fresh renewed conflicts will not be unwelcome if the Lord will purpose to use

me here still. O could you read my heart, you would see there a history which I am sure would give you peace for me whatever may be the closing scenes of my life.

For your blessed joys in the Lord I earnestly pray. I ask our glorious Head to shed down in abundance his Spirit's peace and power through your soul. O may He hear and give you, my friend, the suitable feelings for those peculiar circumstances which brought us into association in the work! I know it requires great patience, great self-government, great simplicity, and great humility to meet *the day* which has thus been ordained for you; but all these things you have in the living fountain, and although there is trial in it, there is high privilege also, and it is a blessing to be put into situations which act like a furnace to ourselves, separating the precious from the vile, and making us to bring a *pure* offering. The Lord ever bless you, and pour sweet peace upon your sometimes pained heart; then for *such* peace the pain itself that led to its impartation is rendered dear! Farewell, the Lord be the *Mizpah* to which we look.

Believe me your ever affectionate friend and sister,
M. S.

CXLV.

Offered Excuse—Spiritual Banquet—Subject of Prophecy—Guard against mutual Displeasure—Effects of Testimony of the coming Lord.

I SEIZE this first leisure moment, my ever dear friend, to reply to your little messenger, and gladly would I meet your wish respecting to-morrow; but perhaps it may

not be needful as for a preventive of discussion which might not be pleasant. I think Mr. —— will wish to see the schools, in which case there will be but the time of a hasty meal. Do not think I hesitate in my compliance with your desire from reluctance. I have no need to tell you that it is a cordial to my heart, if I can in any smallest degree drop one portion of comfort into yours. But I am very unwell ; I feel my cold exceedingly oppressive, and have intended if I should be no better to-morrow that I would stay at home in the afternoon. At any rate, just now I feel as if the exertion of meeting a party would be very painful. Maria, you know, scarcely sits down to her dinner, and would be of no use.

And now shall I be *angry* with you, my beloved friend ? To this question I give my own reply, for I cannot feel or express such an emotion towards you. But you *want scolding*, in the first place, for speaking of the spiritual banquet you are able to spread, in such unworthy terms ; for when you proffer that dear Lamb who is the rich food of the soul, surely, if there be appetite in those to whom it is offered, the feast must be abundant. As to the subject of prophecy, it need not always be introduced, nor do I think Mr. —— would do it. You will find him very different in manner from your expectation ; he has a simplicity and teachableness of deportment which is very remarkable, unless provoked by rude excitements to argue. His *written* style is not according to his conversational manner. So then be not under the influence of what a few hot and incautious expressions from his pen may seem to have justified in your breast, and receive him, my dear friend, as one whom you may commune with in the spirit of peace. You know we must be on our guard, lest displeasure at the heat or abusive words of a bro-

ther should generate the same disposition in ourselves. I am always very much afraid of that effect in my own heart; it is so easy to be thrown off our watch in this respect.

It is indeed much to be lamented that human weakness has been blended so manifestly in the discussion of divine revelations; but the subject of revelation remains of the same holy importance; and I hope, my dear friend, that you and I shall have the same mind in this instance as we have in others, and give our earnest attention to those important points. It is our privilege to search every part of the sacred volume with equal interest. If we can be aided in our steps by light reflected through others it is well; and we can discriminate between what *is* light and what is not. And certainly, to my own soul, I do consider the glowing testimony which respects a *coming* Lord as one full of excitement and consolation. There *is* a way of studying and of teaching these privileges and purposes of the covenant which, I believe, is full of the most practical effects. But this I only observe by the way.

I have also to *scold* you for what you say respecting
* * * Now then we may dismiss the scolding parts of my note; and I will hope that a scold wrapped up in such a loving mantle will fall from its dress with sweet peace on your heart,—if it is faithful to my commission it will do so.

Maria wishes to press you not to have the children to-day to repeat their Psalms; they can easily be put off till you are better; and if you determine to do so and will send into the school, H—— will give notice for any other day that you may appoint. We send the Bibles and paper, to be ready for your disposal. We are at Stonefall, putting packages in order, &c. &c. Such occupations take us a little out of the general course

we are appointed to run ; but I find, even in these things, how we are privileged to enjoy an open spring of spiritual refreshment. Blessed be the Holy Spirit, we need not have our *minds* tied and bound to the employment of our hands ; and the soul can still wing its heavenly way, or still feel the consciousness of dwelling in the cleft of the Rock. I entreat the divine Sanctifier to make us know more and more of His indwelling faithfulness, and to fill us with His manifestation. O, my dear friend, how precious are His consolations—how dear the holy rest, which, in the midst of tumult, he has the power and the will to give. Let us welcome His blessed witness within and roll all our burdens upon covenant love !

Farewell. The mercies of Jesus be yours, my friend, in richest abundance !

Your affectionate and faithful sister,

M. S.

CXLVI.

Waiting Suspense—Mind prepared—Obscure Dispensation—Interview with a Converted Jew—Missionary Sermons, &c.

THE sight of your handwriting, my beloved brother, proved very reviving to my spirit ; I was thankful to be thus far assured of your safety as carried on your journey by the faithful keeper of the saints, and much more was my soul glad to hold communion with yours as I passed through the precious contents of your letter. I may call them precious, since they are of Him who is the treasure of our hearts. It is sweet, although it may be with a mixture of sorrowful feeling, thus to express

the resignation of our will to His, and thus to animate each other in looking out for the pillar and the cloud by which our steps are to be directed. At this moment in which I am writing, the eventful decision will probably have taken place, and it is now determined whether the privilege of an association in pilgrimage is continued or suspended; but whatever solicitude may pass the heart on this subject we know that the eternal *home* will see us associated for ever, in higher and more exalting joys than can be tasted here, and where no solicitudes can come. To this end of the warfare may our eyes be stedfastly directed, and the interposing events of this life be overpassed by the energy of that sight which looks within the veil. Should it be the will of our Lord to continue the flowing of the stream of our communion, which hitherto we have found to yield so much pure delight, we will hope that it will be with increased appetite and spiritual thirsting of soul; if it is directed into another course, and your testimony is to be ordered in its way to run into the desert where you now are, surely we will rejoice in the benefit of others, and pray that it may prove the means of making the myrtle and rose to blossom, where, as yet, there appears the briar and thorn. Every day's experience seems to shew us that the life of a christian is one of perpetual self-denial; and that we must stand prepared to sacrifice our own wishes to the interests of the "*body*;" and happy it is for us to be privileged in having opportunities wherein to demonstrate that we do this thing in a loving and filial heart. It is thus that I commune with my own spirit, my friend, under present circumstances, and strive to realize the privilege of finding it meat and drink to do or to suffer our Father's will. The language of David when he mourned over his departed Jonathan may well describe the nature of those feelings

which exist when friends, dear to each other by the love of Jesus and by the sacred congeniality of affections consecrated to heaven, are separated: "very pleasant hast thou been to me," may truly be said when the sweet tide of christian communion is called to mind; nevertheless, when the Lord says, "surrender this stream, I have need of it elsewhere," we have then to prove how fellowship with Him is an all-sufficient portion!

I commit this interesting concern to Him: we have all asked the counsel of heaven, and we must believe that He who has engaged to answer prayer will give the reply satisfactorily to our minds. The providence which first brought you, beloved brother, to this little spot, and made you a sharer in our circumstances of trial at such an important period of experience, must be acknowledged by us through all eternity as amongst divine purposes and divine mercies: the peculiar situation of this vineyard also, and the suitableness of your testimony to the condition of the people, and the agreement amongst us in our views and reception of the blessed covenant, are all not only points of great interest, but have served to involve the *present* dispensation in a degree of obscurity, through which we, of course, have felt it difficult to penetrate; but the Lord himself, after having tried us, will disperse the shades of uncertainty, and give us to know his will.

I look for your next letter with some degree of anxiety—yet I trust it is not the anxiety of unbelief—it will, however, prove the channel of communication of the deepest moment to us. May Jesus accept the rising appeal which now springs up to Him from my heart, and which supplicates Him to shew that He is the decider of the question; then we shall say, "All is well!"

I am writing in M——'s room at K——; she has her party of teachers in the next room, and I came down with her for the purpose of having an interview with a converted Jew; he comes introduced to us by some christian friends, and is one cast off by his own brethren on account of his christianity. He was at the meeting last night, and affected by a subject which turned much upon the state of Israel. It is highly interesting to hear him speak of the fulfilment of prophecy in the person of our beloved Messiah, and of the conflicts of his soul upon this subject when first his mind began to catch the gleams of light; yet he is not under apparently deep *spiritual views*; his understanding seems to be the chief seat of the Spirit's present operation; we will trust that the penitential rivers shall flow from his smitten heart ere long, and that he will be one of the remnant that shall glorify God in Christ.

We past our last Sabbath with many thoughts and words about you, my dearest brother, and with affectionate desire to see you once again a worker with us.
* * * * We expect two sermons to be preached on Sunday next by the deputed pleader for the missionaries. Next Monday evening you know we shall be engaged, please God, in the National school, I have therefore changed my own engagement into Wednesday.

I pray the Lord to pour his consolations and richest mercies into both mind and body, and to bless you, my brother, with his fullest demonstrations of love. The blessings of Jesus be upon you.

I am your faithfully affectionate sister and friend,
M. S.

CXLVII.

Relapse of Health—Supplications—Standard of Interpretation—Words registered—Appropriation essential—Communion in sick Chamber—Demonstration of change of heart.

My affectionate thoughts have had many excursions to you, my beloved friend and brother, and during the last two days they have been attended with a mixture of solicitude ; for I have wished to be writing to you, and have feared that your own spirit will begin to fear for me lest I should not be sufficiently strong in body for this engagement. You know how faithfully I sympathize with every feeling of your heart, and how truly I would continue to be an appointed channel through which consolation might be poured into your breast.

Since we parted I have had many variations of health. A little appearance of renovation to my frame induced my friends to think I might venture out into the air, but the experiment proved injurious and threw me back ; so that I have been under the former discipline again, and it is now advised me not to leave my room until my cough subsides. I already feel the beneficial effects of this advice, so far as my lungs may be considered ; but my debility is extreme, attended with a general pain in my frame, which sometimes exhausts me.

I have been thus particular in what concerns this poor falling tabernacle, because I am sure the subject is one of interest to your heart ; and also because I desire you to understand the reason why I did not reply to your dear and welcome letter immediately.

I have had *time* and I have had *strength*, had no other demand been upon me ; but the reception of our Harrogate friends, and some little transactions needful

to be discharged before they left us, proved almost more than I was able to meet. We are now comparatively alone; and I am beginning to anticipate a return to my writing avocations, if the Lord is pleased to put energy into my remaining days; and I gladly open my desk to tell you a little of what is full in my heart, and to hold sweet communion with you as we have been wont to do.

Previously to the arrival of your letter, my mind had drawn the picture of your first sabbath at H—, well knowing in how many things it would prove a season of trial. I looked into your various engagements on that day, and from my silent room I offered up the supplication which we know that our Lord will receive, praying Him to be the eternal refuge and sheltering rest in this moment of painful exercise.

The change at first will necessarily present the constant memorial of the event which bore you away, by exhibiting so completely a different scene; but I rest upon the Lord's blessed sufficiency, who has the power and will to open such occasions of interest in the vineyard as may be a balm to the wound.

I long to hear that the poor people receive the dispensation in the love of the truth; not only that Jesus may be glorified in them, but that you, my friend, may be cheered by conscious usefulness; yet we will not dictate to the Lord—he knows what is most desirable for us; and if it will prove more sanctifying to the soul that such an experience be withheld, we will interpret His ways according to that standard which regulates them all, remembering that "God is love!" How sustaining is this recollection, how powerfully does it hush every rising storm in the soul, and quiet the throbings of the heart when human interests would make it beat in anxiety; and O with what cheering

gratitude should we cleave to this revelation! Truly I can say there is no other support which I feel strong enough to sustain the weight of *necessity* with which I fall upon the Covenant provision.

Were you now sitting by me on the sofa, and were I speaking instead of writing this, I know your voice would echo back the sound; and I can imagine that I hear you adding to this the words we resolved to register in our minds—"I will love thee, O Lord, my strength!" This interchange of love between Christ and the soul is precious; there is nothing to be experienced in the way of peace without appropriation,—this is the essential accompaniment to the faith we profess; and my desire, my beloved fellow-pilgrim, is that your heart and mine may ever be treasuring up this blessed privilege,—ever saying perpetually, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His."

We had a refreshing evening last Tuesday,—it was the last night before our friends left H., and we called to mind the love of our dying Lord in the blessed ordinance which refreshed *us* also the week before. Previously to the rest of the family coming up into my room I had some holy converse with L——; we sate together by the light of the mild moon, which shone sweetly through my window;—all was still and calm; such a night as we might suppose marked that awful period when Jesus withdrew to Gethsemane. We talked of his sufferings and of his power to save; and when we partook of the bread and wine, we united in some sweet sounds of a hymn, well according with the frame of my mind, and expressive of that personal consecration to the Cross, which I ardently desire increasingly to feel, and pray to realize even unto death. I need not tell you perhaps that I remembered you before Him whom we love. I trust we shall always associate

the interests of each other in such solemn approaches to our God. Very soon, I trust, we shall be called to an approach before Him, which shall be near and solemn and joyful in all the fulness of accomplished promises; and then, my friend, we will bless Him in highest strains of exultation; and in counting up His mercies to us in the wilderness, we will number those things which have been severe to nature, but which have served to rivet the nails which fasten our hearts to a crucified Saviour! Let us be fervently bent upon maintaining this high existence,—let us be constantly on the wing, soaring above this scene of sin and wretchedness,—let us be laboriously diligent in seeking to exhibit the beauty of Emmanuel, and in copying close the features we love in Him. O, my friend, herein we shall have sweet employ; and the Holy Ghost will not fail us, in whom He hath wrought such desires.

I rejoice in the tidings that my dear Mrs. —— so realizes the nature of the heavenly life; but I expected that she would experience perhaps more sensibly the change in her own feelings whilst at B—— than at K——. Sometimes we are scarcely sensible of the extent of the difference that exists in us until we are placed in circumstances wherein we necessarily find a want of congeniality in those around us; and when this is proved in places where once we could contrive to *waste* a day without much distaste, it seems as a striking demonstration of the new appetites the Spirit has inspired. Give my true, my tender love to her,—tell her how my soul longs for her rich enjoyment of all the fulness of grace, and that I trust her faith will firmly apprehend the never-failing Jesus!

I am sorry I could not meet her affectionate desire of a letter from me to B——. I was too ill, and am even now fatigued by writing this little messenger. Give

my love to J——, to M—— J——, and all the dear little ones,—and to that loved infant who is so interesting to us all, give the kiss of love;—may the prayers offered for him, when we presented him to Jesus, be abundantly answered! And will you tell M—— O——, with my love, that I am sorry I had no conversation with her before she left K——, and that I would affectionately charge it upon her to seek to glorify the Lord in her station, and to remember her great responsibility.
* * * * * I am now going to repose on my sofa. I feel very weak when I attempt any employment. Farewell, my ever dear and beloved friend; always think of me as faithfully sharing in all your heart's interests, for I am truly your attached friend, sister and fellow-traveller, in dearest bonds,

M. S.

How beautiful the country around you must be! My mind's eye contemplates that encircled window you describe. All here is unusually beautiful for this cold region; and my *little lamb*, as I call her, often brings me in some sweet flower, still exhibiting the beautiful tints the Lord bestows.

CXLVIII.

*Fellowship of the Spirit—Mystery of the Christian Life—Exercise of Patience—
Blessing on Ministrations.*

MY BELOVED FRIEND AND BROTHER,
I THOUGHT, ere your letter came, I would devote an hour this evening to commune with you; but I intended to put my letter in the parcel, which will go,

please God, on Monday, with the music-books, &c. This desire meeting with the communication in your letter has given me a double pleasure in this engagement. My dear friend, may we ever find it thus, and rejoice in oneness of soul in Christ Jesus ! We have had the pledges and tokens of His presence with us in many a holy moment of high fellowship ; we have been permitted again and again to spread the wing and soar to that sublime and satisfying region where Jesus unveils His blessed countenance. Nor are these hours fled for ever ; possibly in this world we may again be pouring forth the fulness of our hearts on these blessed subjects, to each other's listening ear. But whatever may be the divine purpose respecting the days yet to be passed in the wilderness, there is a period which makes haste, and will bring us into that, our blessed home, wherein this struggling principle of the new and eternal existence will have free liberty to develope itself, released from the impediments under which it groans whilst we are in the body. Then, my dear friend, we shall see what is the unsearchable wisdom, love and grace which is now our guide, and by which our lot is mercifully appointed. O with what songs of praise and love shall we celebrate His name, and how entirely shall we, after having past such a rolling stormy sea, delight in the peace that pervades that blissful shore !

I do not say, *may* I see you there—I believe we there shall meet, and be foremost to delight in contemplating the reflection of Jesus' image in the measure in which He is admired in His saints !

Is not the Christian life a glorious mystery ? Now we can talk of these things as of our *own* glory, whilst all the glory is His ! and how well we understand, in this feeling, what it is to be one with Christ, so as to share all He has !

Whilst thus meditating on our inheritance we become more peaceful, whilst *under age*. This again sounds mysterious, but it is true ; for though we would gladly spring, this moment, upwards, and enter the rest, we are made patient, being quite sure that we are travelling according to the will of the Lord ; so that our light affliction seems but for a moment, when compared with the exceeding weight of glory reserved for us ! Let these thoughts cheer your heart, assuage every sorrow and lessen every pang. I know it will be so—I feel that a room, where sickness and langour prevail,—or a vine-yard where labour and toil await,—or a path where sorrow and temptations arise, are sanctified and soothed, if Jesus Christ and the hope of his appearing be present with us there,—and I know that brother has a kindred mind !

I rejoice to think that you have so many souls in your congregation. I do not hesitate in believing that you are to have many seals among them ; for the dispensation altogether has been of too striking a nature not to assure us that results will follow ; yet we have to be prepared for the exercise of patience. The husbandman waiteth long time for the return to the seed he has sown ; and he who sows it may die before the crop springs up to sight. It is so sometimes in the labour for souls, and we have no reason to be discontented if it be so. The Lord will give the manifestation in eternity, to the joy of the labourer. And we know not how many evils he may have prevented by withholding the present knowledge of it. Sometimes he keeps back a temptation to love popularity, and sometimes he gives the opportunity to demonstrate simplicity by this dispensation ; in either case we may rejoice. I may however give you, my beloved friend, that consolation, which I am sure you will prize, and tell you that your ministry here has been

more extensively acknowledged than was known whilst you were with us. I hear of many who give evidence of having received the word effectually from your lips, and of numbers who have experienced comfort and excitement under your testimony. It will follow that I tell you of the deep grief and regret of the people at having lost your voice. There is a mixture of pain and pleasure in hearing these things. I was affected the other day by an unfeigned burst of feeling expressed in speaking the sentiment of many—"Oh that we could get him back again!" Take this cordial, my beloved friend, and do not mix it with bitter, for I know, at the moment, you will be ready to respond—"Oh that I could make my way back again." Such is the voice of nature, and, perhaps, also of *grace*; but we cannot doubt the divine will, and this silences the heart.

Your affectionate friend and sister,

M. S.

CXLI.

*Invalid State—Temporary Tabernacle—Creation as a Type—Obedience a Motive
—Loss by Indecision—Erroneous Doctrine.*

VERY gladly, my beloved friend, do I devote the present hour to the sweet employ of conversing with you.
* * * Mr. C——, for the first time since I wrote last to you, ventured down to the morning-service as a hearer and part of the congregation, for he could not officiate; this has been a very tedious kind of attack, and although he is now, we may gratefully say, quite better as to his general health, he continues to have a weakness in his throat, which disables him. I know

how deeply this part of my communication will interest you ; and as I have insensibly entered upon the subject in the first place, I will continue it till I have put you in possession of a view of all our present circumstances. * * * We have however learnt the force and beauty of the blessed scripture which reminds us how “ he that believeth doth not make haste,” and as a privilege to act upon such heavenly counsels *as our own*. I am sure your supplications will be offered, that divine direction may be given and prevail in this time of need.

I am still sensible of an invalid state which might presently reduce me back again to great weakness. As this is the case, I forbear to do any thing, hoping that, if I am to live, I shall be better enabled to work in the flock, when I have less of sedentary occupation. Were it not for the sake of this relative calling, I could be well pleased to remain an invalid for the rest of my pilgrim-days. There is a certain holy melancholy sometimes steals across the frame, which perhaps is very much induced by the state of the body, and in which I find a luxury of feeling I would not part with. In such a frame of soul, we seem disposed to hover in spirit over those sacred places of christian meditation where the spirit delights to be,—Gethsemane, Calvary, and the tomb, are regions where a sorrowful heart may profitably rest ; and truly I am disposed, my beloved brother, in this time of my pilgrimage, very much to build my temporary tabernacle near those blessed scenes. How precious are the moments when, with these affections swelling in the heart, external objects contribute their aid to soothe and solemnize the mind.

Some such aids are found in this sweet retreat. Here I contemplate the varied sky ; look on the glowing clouds which receive the last beam of the setting

sun, or gaze upon the soft and interesting light of the moon. These are objects which yield gratification, even to minds which rise no higher than the creature; how much more exquisite is our pleasure, privileged as we are to see our souls' beloved in all things; not merely as their Creator, but as shadowed forth in them, either in his own mysterious person or redeeming work.

How can I wonder that your heart should be at times cast down. Surely it is a great and an affecting change that has taken place in respect of spiritual things, and it would be ungracious were it in your heart not to feel one sigh at parting from what was so dear to you in the Lord. It would be folly to deny the fact that in this respect there *is* every thing to awaken tenderest regret, and more especially since we have such manifestation of the blessing that rested upon your ministration here. But since we have seen that the Lord "moves in a mysterious way and plants his footsteps in the sea," we will not judge by human reasonings, but wait for the development of his glory in this dispensation, trusting that this end has been in the whole! Surely it was no gratification to nature to decide as you were led to do; and even when we may be disposed to view the decision through a gloomy medium, we can always return to this recollection, *It was not a step of haste*, nor done without due deliberation before God. The motive was certainly obedience to His will, and He regardeth such springs of action.

Perhaps, when your little vineyard is more in form and order, you will have some blessed reviving scenes. I look forward to this with earnest hope that so the Lord will comfort you! * * * What a pity it is that men do not pursue the advantages which are opened for them by the Lord's providence! What a promising little vineyard — once seemed

to be,—and how many hungry souls are left to disappointment by the indecision of ——. O my friend ! how thankful should we be if the Lord condescends to endow us with more stedfastness of principle. I see that nothing can be effected without it, either in the souls of others or in the culture of our own ; and when this reflection is brought to my mind, I cannot but lift up a humble offering of acknowledgment, if the Lord has given *firmness* to the character of our souls. Let us cultivate the gift as a talent, seeking to have it *imbued with meekness* ; for they must be united together in order to render us consistent as disciples of Jesus. How beautiful the *perfect combination* of these dispositions appears, as seen in Him, our Lord and Life. Oh may He give us increased conformity to Himself!

I cannot endure the contentions which, alas ! alas ! the professing church would seem perpetually to be inviting. Oh how much more blessed is it to sit at Jesus' feet and call HIM Lord,—then, all is well, and we are preserved from innumerable evils and kept in holy peace ! But we are, in some measure, obliged to become acquainted with what is taking place, that we may be prepared with our spiritual weapons ready for use.

And now, my beloved brother and friend, farewell. May every blessing abide with you all, dear ones ! Give my very true and faithful love to my dear Mrs. —— and all the sweet little circle. Believe me, your very affectionately attached friend in the bonds of Jesus,

M. S.

CL.

Practical Knowledge—Remarks on Temptation.

I SINCERELY thank you, my beloved friend, for your welcome letter, rendered doubly welcome to my heart by the blessed assurance it affords me of your stedfastness in the pure faith of the cross ; in which, I trust, we shall be maintained whatever may arise to assail it. Our strong consolation has an inexhaustible source, for it flows from the promise which is pledged to every teachable disciple, and which embraces all our interests from time to eternity. This is the period in which we behold the fulfilment of what our Lord has forewarned us to expect in the latter times ; and happy it is for us that we are prepared by his faithful influence to stand firm in *scripture* doctrine.

It is grievous to behold the subtlety of Satan and the success of his devices ; but let us never lose sight of the joyful certainty that Emmanuel reigns, and will triumphantly maintain his own cause.

These convulsions which shake the earth, and alas ! disturb the professing Church, do not affect the throne of our Lord ; his dominion shall prevail from sea to sea, and every individual of his flock shall be preserved to the final day. Our knowledge of these doctrinal truths is now to become *practical*, and our own souls must now diligently derive from them their sustaining and joyful influence. I believe that one of the designs of the enemy is to distress the *real* saints, by the delusions, heresies, and divisions which deceive the unwary ; and it therefore becomes part of our duty, as lovers of and believers in Jesus, to manifest that this is seen, and the attempt impotent. Why should *we* be disquieted ? Why

are *we* to be depressed? These are no *strange* things, and if properly used they will serve only to confirm us more in simplicity and affiance. It is my earnest desire that we may openly demonstrate our privilege, and that all men may see us unmoved, secure, and patient, because we know whom we have believed, and are settled and established in the faith.

It rejoices me that you find the observations sent you by my dear sister, satisfactory and useful, respecting the human nature of our beloved Lord. We feel your powerful appeal, my dear friend, and are ready to embrace the call to put in a testimony against the error; and if it please the Lord to enable me, I purpose making an attempt to shew the nature of Jesus' sympathy; and his *very holiness* is *necessary* for this end.

But let me now pass to your question respecting the several passages on temptation to which you refer. First, it is needful to have correct notions of the signification of the word temptation, which means *trial, experiment, proving*. It may be presented either from God, or from Satan and our spiritual enemies, and may arise from various instruments or means; but it is *always* intended to make *proof of us*, or to discover and bring out what is in us.

From Satan and spiritual enemies it comes with an evil design to bring out sin, and to try whether we will be faithless. From God it never can come with an *evil* design, as shewn in James i. 12—17;—yet he sometimes so tempts us as to make proof of us. Thus he did tempt Abraham, Gen. xxii. 1, and so he may lead us like Israel, as in Deut. viii. 1—3, but always intending our good; dispensing these kinds of providences for the purpose of demonstrating our grace, or for revealing our hidden corruption, that we may be instructed in the life of experience and discipline.

We are to count it all joy when we fall into such providential dispensations as prove or exercise us, because such temptations make the upright more holy and more humble. "Blessed is the man that *endureth temptation*;" that is, who can bear the temptation and prove that he is sincere in his profession;—"when he is tried," that is, when this experiment discovers the truth of the principle that is in Him, He is seen and owned to be one who "shall receive the crown of life!"

But we pray "lead us not into temptation." This appears to mean, Do not so leave us to the coldness, sin, or corruption of our hearts as that we should put thee upon leading us into such temptations, or trials, or provings, as are to humble and distress us by painful detection of our neglected and careless souls. Observe, it is joined with "but deliver us from evil;" and I should explain it thus, as if praying, "O Lord, deliver me from the evil of the world, from the evil of a deceitful heart, from the deceivings of Satan—let me not fall into such a state of carelessness, &c., as shall put thee upon the necessity of leading me into situations or giving me up to conflicts which will correct me by shewing me what a wretch I am ready to become." Perhaps your own personal circumstances will tend to explain the subject. You are surrounded by temptations or *proving* occurrences,—the presentation of these new ideas, &c. to your mind has brought out your stedfastness; count it all joy that you have been so tempted, for it has shewn you that the Lord is keeping and teaching you.

Suppose, on the other hand, that you had gone up to town unconcerned, and careless, and self-confident,—it would have been necessary to cure you of such evils; and God might have used *temptation* for the cure, leading you into the present society and scenes around you,

so as to make you feel that you had sinned in not being more diligent, better informed, and more dependent; since you were not able to give an answer nor satisfy your own mind in these points. This would make you unhappy—it ought not to have been needful so to humble you—you would come to God in penitence and grief as one justly corrected for unprofitableness! It is against such evil and such correction that we pray when we say, “Lead us not,” &c.

We have a memorable example of what is meant, in the history of Peter. He was self-confident, and would not believe himself capable of denying Christ—no words from Christ could convince him; it was therefore needful to abase him, and cure this vanity by putting him into a situation in which he should be obliged to acknowledge this depraved nature as not to be trusted in.

May the eternal Spirit keep us, my beloved friend, from every degree of such self-ignorance, or such lamentable chastisements! And if ever the Lord is pleased to direct the proving dispensation of temptation to us, may it never be on account of *evil* in us, but for the manifestation of his indwelling kingdom in our hearts!

How rejoiced I shall be to see you once more amongst us, coming from the field of battle a still more experienced soldier of the cross, and ready to unite with us here in seeking to unfurl the banner and to win poor sinners. I look forward to your proposed time of return with great affection. You will hear all particulars from ——, what a life of change and vicissitude this is; but it will soon give place to one of endless and abiding bliss!

I know not whether you can read this letter. I am writing at my school, after so cold a drive down that my

hand has not recovered its proper feeling, and I have no pen or knife but an old one which will scarcely obey my impulse. Remember me to all my beloved friends with you in the truest affection ; all here love you and yours ; believe me my very, my ever dear friend, yours in the tenderest love of Jesus.

M. S.

CLI.

Persevering in Prayer—Intercession of the Holy Spirit—Holy Boldness—Single Eye—Powerful Peace—The Lord's Sovereignty—Satisfaction on arrival of Curate.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

My heart does affectionately go forth to yours under your present exercise. May He who is our Eternal and intimately-present Friend be bountiful in His present communications to your precious soul, and prove that notwithstanding He has led you into grief, it is according to Deut. i. 33. And O may you be enabled to rejoice in a dwelling-place even whilst clouds are there.

This supernatural existence is given to us, and we are privileged to say "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;" and no wonder, since God, even our God, is *with us* everywhere and anywhere ! Now, beloved, you want not only to feel Him thus near you, but to speak to Him as favourably regarding your request. It pleases our Lord sometimes to *keep* the secret of His purposes towards us long undivulged, purposely to exercise the faith and perseverance of our wrestlings ; and we have to remember that in respect of our dispositions *to pray* we have no limit ; we are encouraged to persevere.

(Luke xviii. 1.) It is true that as the grace of supplication is the fruit of the Spirit's indwelling, who maketh intercession for us according to the *mind of God*; it is possible that this disposition, as it is in expression for a particular object, may be restrained, as seems to have been the case, in Abraham's intercessory prayer for Sodom. But so long as we experience enlargements of heart, and liberty to speak, either in the warm utterance of lively affection, or by the diligent stirring-up of the grace that is in us, we seem to have full permission to urge our requests. And my opinion is, that we may come in this holy boldness to the throne of grace, to ask what we *will*, so long as our boldness is *holy*, and *subject* to what may be the better mind of God. I say, *better* mind, because His will is *always* best, being infinite in holiness. "The wind bloweth where it listeth;" and in a moment, if God will, the powerful passing over of that Spirit, whose breathings give life, may come either with a *rushing* noise, or in a *whispering* breeze. All is of God! and the time and the way equally so with the choice of every vessel of mercy.

Our intercessions will, I trust, ever be imbued with this disposition, which we, who rest in the *Covenant*, should have; for true views of our God will make all His rule to be justified by us in a submissive, grateful, filial admiration of His ways.

Here, beloved friend of my heart, let your soul put forth its energies, and seek to *lay hold* of the Divine will, that in it your own may be lost! I know it is a difficult attainment, so long as we are encumbered with human calculations, or pressed heavily upon by powerful affections; but when the eye is single, the whole body is full of light; and then the whole, *the whole*—that is, I suppose, the whole of the *Divine Government*, also is full of light (Luke xi. 36.)

Let us remember Him whose sympathies have all the character of his advocacy mingled in them, through which He imparteth certain help and powerful peace. Yes; powerful peace, for it triumphs in the mightiest seas, and lives above sorrow's heaviest storm! Marvellous indeed are all the rich impartations we receive from our Living Head. They are all mighty and supernatural; and to whatever we turn our attention in His inward government, we cannot but be filled with conviction of the excellency and of the strength of his invisible operations. It appears as if it were his delight to take occasion to constrain our observance of this greatness; for he is always working most in untoward materials, and by most improbable means, to bring to nought things that are, by things that are not. Let this be consolation to us. His thoughts are not as our thoughts, and His ways are not to be contemplated as subject to the accidents, obstructions, or lets that surround them;—“I will work, and who shall let it,” is the demand of the Lord upon creation’s ear; and you and I, my friend, can echo back the sound, with rejoicing, for *this we* have proved. What an inexhaustible source of joy and delight is opened to us in the revelation of Jehovah’s *sovereignty!* O may we exalt Him in this his greatness, and crown Him with gladness, “God over all, blessed for ever!”

Rejoice with us, my friend, in the marvellous goodness of our God in the dispensation which has given us a curate of a more than ordinary value. O how has the Lord abounded towards this place in *lengthened* outpourings of undeserved love: We trust God will arrest the hearts of many, and make them His own—that this dear man will be a chosen instrument to win many! The gift to us at this particular crisis in the town is amongst the wonders God has long been working for

us,—blessed be His name! Possibly it is for a last ingathering;—but be it as it may, our God is glorified in thus maintaining our experience of His patient mercy and unchanging love. Ever yours in the dearest ties,

M. S.

CLII.

Sprained Ankle—Prayer for Nation and Church—No “Almost”—Expectation of largely-extended Blessings.

I AM quite sure that you, my beloved friend, will have been looking for a New Year's offering from my pen, and I regret that I have not had the power to meet you thus with the first day's dawn.

I cannot at this moment present any reply to your last. I am at K——, where I am for a season laid up, and your letter is at Stonefall. Now you will say, “And what is it which thus detains her at K——?” I will quickly satisfy your enquiry,—I have sprained my ankle. Last Thursday, in the afternoon, I was hastily going down from the Vicarage to my school, and my foot caught the iron at the bottom of the churchyard-gate, which threw me prostrate, with my foot turned under me. The pain was great, and it was with much difficulty that I reached the door; but after some application it appeared to abate, and I held my little meeting of young men that evening in the dining-room, and returned to Stonefall at night,—all which increased the evil, and obliged me to be in bed till Saturday, and to apply leeches. On Saturday, contrary to advice, I came down, in the hope that I might be

able to have my Sunday meetings. But the consequence has been increased swelling; so that now I am constrained to keep my leg laid up, and do not feel very well generally. Yet I can work, and have *little parties*, profitable and refreshing to us all, so that it is well; and soon I trust the Lord will give me back to walk in His way as usual. May our precious Living Head impart His sufficiency and reveal His mind, and we find *joy* along with the proportion of His strength. This has been a more than ordinary busy season, or I should have written before this. At all times the various institutions winding up at this period occasions some additional engagements; and as the young people grow up, their claims advance, and we had many little parties to tea, which have left us very little time;—here is also the bustle of an election, which calls for another expression of feeling. These are interesting times; and contemplating events, as we do, through the medium of revelation, it seems to us that the Lord is expressing some long-suffering towards our land, which may preserve a lengthening of tranquillity to the kingdom and to the church. But we are short-sighted, and the Lord may have other designs. At any rate it is time for prayer, and we are bound to remember how many enlivening instances are upon record, in our precious Book of wonders; wrought for people and kingdoms, in answer to such appeals to the Covenant Ruler of the earth. May it please the Lord graciously to pour out from on high the blessed Spirit of supplication, and to open our hearts as recipients of the grace, so that our cry may be the effectual, the energized prayer of the righteous, and enter the ear of the Lord as the well-known utterance of His child.

O that we had true pleaders for TRUTH (in the Senate.) But this we probably are not to look for in

this day ; but we can unite the blessed experience of earnest desire with loving *resignation*. This is a privilege by which all our present engagements are sweetly tempered to us, and it is a preparation of heart for the final revelation of the righteous government of the Lord, wherein we anticipate much of destroying controversy, as well as of delivering power. This reminds me, my beloved friend, of the exercises of your heart upon the subject of God's contention with men, and revives my supplications to Him, that He may pour richly into it all those *consolatory* recollections of the wisdom and love of Jesus, which have long been your precious cordial in every private individual case.

Beloved friend, we know nothing of an "*almost*" committed trust, given by the stedfast infinite wisdom to Him also who is the mystically glorious Lord, Life, King. There is no indecision in any purpose, any act, any way of Jehovah. He ordereth all things after the counsel of his own will ; and all His works are ever before Him for all eternity. This is *our* only certain hold upon any one promise, and the only source of sure hope. I believe that in proportion to our sense of these truths, we are at peace and able to glorify Him. Let us beware of Peter's spirit when he said, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" And hear Jesus' words— "What is that to thee, follow thou me!" Secret things belong to the Lord, enough is revealed for us.

O let us seek an increase of holy persuasion that we are devoted to a service of love, and that throughout that service we have the cherished disposition which moves to the cry of Abba, Father ! We cannot be left without help when in possession of such a Parent. Ah, how lamentably we limit the Holy One ; at least so far as our *expectations* go ; and how seldom do we expect or hope for anything like the largely-extended

blessings He is preparing to give. It is difficult really, experimentally, and practically, to credit all that God is to us. But there is power and willingness in our Divine Teacher to fill us with greater perception, and to raise us to more lively confidence ; therefore for this we will incessantly pray !

Farewell, my friend ; I am yours in the eternal bond,
M. S.

CLIII.

Return from Journey—Dispensations of the Gospel—Derby—London.

MY OWN BELOVED FRIEND,

IT is a joy to me to date once more from this sweet abode (Stonefall) where manifestations of divine love have been so frequently given, endearing each step as holy ground, and affording so many Ebenezers on which it is delightful to look ; and I may now raise up another, for in going out and in coming in, the Lord has been our Keeper and Friend. We have travelled in intimate fellowship with our souls' beloved, and have enjoyed the various scenes through which we have passed. Our first going out was attended with fatigue to my dear invalid ; she was extremely debilitated, and the movement and the air tired her frame. But very soon there was a manifest difference, which, by the Lord's blessing, has progressively been given ; so that, though not strong, she is much stronger.

We passed through varied country, and had some interesting resting-places, going on until we reached London, and from thence returning by Cambridge, where we were refreshed by meeting my dear nephew,

whose affectionate heart gave us a warm welcome. We arrived last Friday evening, to the joy of our dear ones, and found all beneath the roof much as we left them. We are in the hands of our Lord, can we be better or safer? O no! All is well where He is the Lord and life! I trust you all, my beloved friends, into the same Almighty arms; and I hope to receive a speedy and comforting assurance of this from your own dear hand. You have been perpetually in my thoughts, and in that holy bond which we are privileged to realize with so much consciousness of its abiding character. It pleased us to observe, notwithstanding the abundings of an evil spirit in this earth, how much there is likewise of zeal and effort, and of fruit also, for the Lord. And in some places we met with souls that acknowledged the name of Jesus with apparent power. In Cambridge there is an abundant dispensation of the Gospel, and laborious men, who have surrendered all things for the Lord; how blessed is this provision in a place which is a kind of source, sending out so many streams! May we not hope that hereby the Lord is giving the word, and that great will be "the company of the preachers."

At Derby we found the same abundance of the preached Gospel, and congregations formed of very interesting looking people, who appeared to *feed* upon the word. Thus, notwithstanding the darkness of a cloud which portends destruction to the earth, the *heaven* is bright, and Jesus is adding to His spiritual firmament many a brilliant star that shall shine for ever there. Let us magnify Him, and let the sounds of Hosannah to the Son of David, be heard even in the midst of the strivings of the adversary.

In London, we saw and heard but little, excepting of the efforts made to impart knowledge to the rising generation, and of the *compassions* men evinced to the miser-

able, in some blessed institutions we went to see. We sought to be unknown in town, because our many friends and connexions there would have required more than, in our circumstances, we could give ; and my Maria required to be kept quiet.

We were received with gladness by our dear ones ; arriving at Stonefall some hours before we had led them to expect us. All was in its usual stillness until Maria's school-girls caught a glimpse of our carriage descending the hill from Harrogate. The effect was like the rushing out of bees from a hive, and the shout and clapping of hands soon brought out more *sober*, but not less fervent greetings from our own dwelling. Similar expressions met us at Knaresborough, and it was a cheerful and a cheering scene—delightful to my soul, and attended with much gratitude for mercies great and marvellous which had attended *our way*, and kept our home ! No evil had come near us ; and much good in the object which induced our journey ; my dear one being considerably strengthened, and retaining the benefit up to this day.

I write this in the midst of resumed work, which, in consequence of absence, is made rather pressing, for a *basket* of letters was presented me on my arrival, and some of them demanding immediate attention. First and foremost my pen, however, has placed you, my beloved friend ; for I well know the tenderness with which you will be waiting to hear of us, and the prayerfulness with which you have kept us in mind.

Farewell, my ever-loved friend. The Lord of all peace bless you ever.

M. S.

CLIV.

Thanksgivings—Simple Dependence.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I WILL not withhold the few lines I can send because they are few, for well I know you will joyfully accept, as from the Lord, a messenger that will bear you good tidings. I call them good with reference to the mercy which the Lord has dispensed in the late afflictive dispensation. Very, very merciful have been all the accompaniments; the *extent* of the stroke has been much more limited than our provocations deserved, and it seems more like a parent's holy warning than a master's angry blow. But now we have had a day of public thanksgiving for the withdrawal of the hand; our board of health is broken up and our hospital again restored to its former use. These are great mercies. The congregation was crowded by persons in whose hearts I believe real affections to the Lord lived in lively exercise, and I trust the offering has been accepted.

Much sickness, however, remains in the place, and many symptoms like what preceded cholera appear in families; keeping alive a watchful dependance, and reminding us how soon the cloud might gather again. Distress likewise is exhibited, the effect of the past scene; and relative exertions are as much required as ever.

Your supplications for us, my ever dear friend, have been answered abundantly; the sheltering presence of our God has kept us in safety of body, and we as yet remain on the earth. To have been taken to higher

regions might have been more in accordance with the affections that long for deliverance from under the burden of mortality ; but there are delights intermingled with mortal endurances which render continuance here in accordance with affections that seek Jesus' glory ! *

I have thought, my beloved friend, that your late letters have breathed a spirit on some occasions *exercised*, —is it on my account ? Say, Peace be still ! Our Lord is with, and in, and for us—what then can be amiss ? As to the circumstances belonging to our continuance here below, very little importance is attached to them excepting as they form part of the divine government ; and we know that the government is upon the shoulder of our all-powerful Friend. And as to the time of life here, we are quite sure its ordained measure is fixed by Him we love. We know, therefore, assuredly that He will give it that extent which is most suited to the end He and we have in view, which is His glory. We need not therefore have any anxieties, but may in simplicity rest our whole weight of care upon our Lord.

I find a merciful influence prevailing in our little flock, which would lead me to suppose it probable I may yet be lent to the work. The dear rising children are very interesting, and some of the boys advancing, I trust, in the heavenly life. * * * We cannot at all times, however, calculate by such a rule, for the Lord's ways are not unfrequently mysterious, and directed in such a way as to call forth faith in *great* simplicity. His ways are in the deep, his footsteps in the seas, a pathway not to be traced by mortal eye. But for ever be His name adored, we can love, and bless, and press after Him ; and wherever He may be, or dispense whatever He will, the “Lord is good,” a present help, a strong tower, a sure friend !

The Lord bless you, dear love, and shower down his

choicest blessings on you, and yours, and mine, and make us lovely flowers, full of fragrant odours, fruitful trees, laden with the holy productions that He will own for ever. I do not write more. I am obliged to distribute small portions of bodily effort, where my heart has very large possessions. But the little, being sent in much—very much love, will rest in your heart, my precious friend !

Ever believe me, with tenderest love to your dear ones,
M. S.

CLV.

Domestic Sickness—Protection of the Lord—Visits to the Sick.

I NEED not enquire whether you, my beloved friend, have or have not a heart of solicitude respecting us. This I am sure you will now be finding within your bosom, for the time is long since we exchanged our thoughts in this form. Severe and continued illness has been the cause on my part; not entirely as sufferer by myself, but as the hand of the Lord resting on our whole household.

Our house at one time had the appearance of a hospital, almost every room containing an invalid, all our servants as well as ourselves individually being under the suffering of the influenza. As I was myself amongst the *first* that suffered, I was mercifully so far restored as to become a general nurse, and in this we cannot but see the great loving-kindness of the Lord, as I am undoubtedly best fitted for the work, as being stronger in body than my sister or my M——; of course, my beloved friend, I have been entirely occu-

pied. I had written half a sheet to you when I had a relapse, and was obliged again to be in bed ; and now I am just come from Mr. C——'s, leaving him for a little while to be quiet after having put on leeches. His has been the worst case, coming upon a frame exceedingly debilitated in consequence of the cholera-time, and he remains extremely reduced, and so liable to inflammation, along with a cough that has been incessant, that we receive the visitation as a warning of what may be our dear Lord's further design respecting him.

In all things, however, my beloved friend, we are upheld, and are amongst the number of those of whom the Lord declares, he will keep them as the apple of his eye. The tenderness of this His protecting love *you know*, my friend. We have each proved it in dear and intimate experience ; and mercies multiplied, upon every occasion in which they are needed, are in very deed precious and cheering pledges of what is to come. Is there anything we more promptly defend than the apple of the eye ? Is there any part of the divine creation so tenderly near to the Lord as his own redeemed ? Or, can there be any He so immediately overshadowed with loving defence ? The Lord grant us ability increasingly to know this close relation subsisting between Him and us, and invest us with the joy which should arise out of the persuasion !

We stand much in need of powerful witness to this our privilege, now in times when the divine purpose is kindling the fire of His jealousy. That it will consume His enemies on every side we know ; that it will purify His children we also know and desire ; but under the dispensation there are various sufferings not to be endured *consistently*, but as strengthened with might in the inner man, by the indwelling of the Lord. Oh ! nothing short of His residence in the heart can give

rest and peace. How wonderful is the fact that the Lord himself rests not in anything short of this union with His people; it is His *design*. And to the glory of His own grace He is pleased to make the unseemly heart a fit abode, cleansing and beautifying it for himself. May He ever abide within His blood-bought house, with His own energy of purpose, maintaining it true!

I have not been wholly prevented working in the vineyard. My open meetings have been kept up, except during the time of my own illness. Private meetings have been necessarily suspended; and, indeed, there has been, and is, so much sickness with us, that private visits in sick chambers seem best adapted for the season. I hope the sanctifying presence of the Spirit is with the rod! The poor in the place suffer deeply, owing to temporal distress, which combined with bodily pain makes the affliction double,—it doubles also the pain of sympathy; but remembering that we have our own sympathetic high priest above, on whose shoulder the government rests, the heart takes comfort and confides in Him.

The tumults of the uncertain and troubled world will also soon be hushed, and the gathering storm be succeeded by blissful calm. This will rejoice the earth, and before that period our own eternal repose may arrive! In proportion as we draw near to the eternal vision of Him whom we love, we *desire* the accomplishment of the bliss. My own soul is increasingly weary of human things, *as human things*, although it be sweet to live, and to live even as, and how, our Lord shall please. But comparing even our highest delights in this land with those for which the Lord is preparing us, it will needs be that sighs occasionally escape, where the language is, “I desire to depart.”

As to bodily health, however, I am greatly restored, and feel quite invigorated for work,—the kind of work our beloved Master will Himself determine for us, and that is enough.

I write you but a little letter, yet it will be welcome. Take therefore the messenger bearing you a full burden of love.

Farewell, my friend, let us never fail to meet in the dear moments of intimacy with our Lord—we will remember each other. God bless you for ever,

M. S.

CLVI.

To Two young Disciples on the Death of their Mother—Faithful Balance.

MY BELOVED ——,

THERE is no *need* that I should write to assure you of my heart's sympathy, for of this you will feel quite assured. Yet it is a mournful kind of gratification thus to express what is felt, and I obey the dictate of my affection. When I first received the intelligence of the earthly loss you have sustained, a painful sensation crossed my heart; but a moment's reflection hushed the emotion into peace; for when a believer departs from this lower scene it is properly a cause for holy gratitude. The suddenness of the call is that which in the present instance occasioned a frail feeling of distress; for we may say that in this respect we were not prepared for the tidings. Blessed is the testimony, however, that to your beloved mother the call could not be surprising, and that her mind had passed under so much of preced-

ing discipline and preparation. When we last met in my little room at K—, I was impressed very much by the cheerfulness of her spirit under circumstances calculated to give her pain. She appeared quite delivered *from* reluctance to quit her long home here, and to feel as if entering upon a new course, wherein she anticipated much spiritual benefit; and I made this observation afterwards, considering it as a sort of token for good. Thus it has proved, my beloved friends, and we may admire the riches of the grace that has abounded in and through this affecting dispensation. Your dear mother now rests from all solicitude, and ceases for ever from the cares which once burdened her; and I rejoice for her that the warfare is accomplished, and the Lord hath shut her in,—in faithfulness removing her from the dangers and distresses of the flood, and giving her the joys that belong to the Covenant! What could we desire or ask for her of greater blessedness? And O, wherefore should we not, even in the midst of grief, let sounds of gladness be heard? They who cannot understand the nature of spiritual experience, may be surprised at the mixture of joy with sorrow, of gladness with grief, which belongs to the soul of a christian; but *we*, my dear ones, are not so ignorant,—these peculiarities have been revealed to us by the Spirit, and it is our privilege to manifest them. For your beloved parents' blessedness then we shall give glory to our Lord, and look for that reunion which, as living members of his body, we anticipate.

In every period, my dearest —, we are introduced by the christian hope into this victory over death; but never did we know a time like that in which we now live, whereby this victory is endeared to us in respect of those whom we love, and who are called away from earth. Times of trouble have already tried this gene-

ration ; prophecy teaches us to look for a continuance of this outstretching of the divine arm ; and although we firmly believe that to the living, strength shall be imparted equal to the day, we likewise know that *emphatically* this is true, “the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.” Do not let us merely moralize upon these great gospel truths ; they are facts wherein is substance, and which we are to embrace, not only professing them as part of a sound creed, but living in and by them, as given for the invigorating of our hope and joy.

I would tenderly and with utmost affection ask, “and what will my dear children, my dear young friends, now do ?” where henceforward will your earthly home probably be ? and what are the purposes which now regulate your proceedings ? Whatever you determine, I trust the great consideration which shall govern all your counsel, will be, *where* you are most likely to *grow*, as plants of the right-hand planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. May the eternal Spirit be your friend, and *heavenly* wisdom be imparted ! The blessings of being established in the faith you understand ; remember, too, my beloved girl, that the Lord makes use of means towards the fulfilment of His own will, and be guided by what *He* may speak in the inner man. It is not alone by our outward circumstances as promising appearances of good, that we are to calculate, but by what may be likely more powerfully to advance us in the existence of Christ as our All in all ; and how we may be furthered in self-renunciation—renunciation also of the world in all its deceitful forms, and consecration of heart and life to His name. These are the essential parts of christian experience ; and whatever most administers nourishment to this existence, we should love and prefer.

Of course you will believe that my observations fall from my pen as flowing out of disinterested love to you, and without any knowledge of what may particularly belong to your circumstances, and which may give a weight in the scale of your balance. But I would say, hold the balance faithfully and with justice,—give no preponderating weight by any suggestion that arises from a carnal or uncounseled mind; but ask, O ask of God, that He would take the decision for you into his hands, and shew you his will;—that will may or may not bring us together again in our journey home. This I simply leave with him; at any rate that journey must soon be finished, and we shall meet to part no more.

All the events that belong to this intermediate period are comparatively of small importance to the believer; for *home* is that which we are pressing to, and desire; and when at home, I believe, we shall together cast our crowns before Jesus' throne, and hail him Lord and Life for ever! Farewell, my dear, my beloved friends. I love you affectionately and faithfully. I beseech the Comforter that he would take of the things of Christ, and in His shewing them unto you, receive him affectionately and faithfully,—the eternal Friend loveth you. May blessings of sweetest kind and of eternal duration descend on your little circle, and the result be inward holiness and peace, and relative usefulness, as fragrance that is shed around by garden-flowers;—O so may you be sweet as flowers of Jesus' spiritual Eden! I am ever yours in Jesus' love,

M. S.

CLVII.

The Blessing of sound Doctrine — Likeness of Members to Head Correspondent — The Spirit's Acknowledgment of his Instruments — Where to pitch Tents — Decision.

OUR hearts will unite in one sentiment, my beloved —, when we look to the time that has elapsed since last we communed together ; and we shall agree to count it *long* ; to me it seems very long since I wrote to, or heard from you ; and gladly do I embrace this opportunity to say something of my heart, and to open out what, I trust, you know is ever folded up there,—for truly I love you in bonds which no circumstance of time can break or loose. May we prove this in *power*, and always realize that we are one in Christ.

I do indeed feel for and sympathize with you in every one of your cares and joys. Of both you have had a measure poured out by the hand of our dearest Lord, and you have taken the cup, and in drinking its contents have tasted that *Jesus* is there. O how sweet are joys when thus sanctified and doubled—how hallowed are sorrows when so dispensed and accompanied ! We would not have either, my friend, unaccompanied by the presence of the Lord ; and blessed be His name He sends them not but from and with Himself to our souls—is it not so ? O let us give glory to Christ by acknowledging this manifestation of his covenant to us.

In the exercises of which you speak in your last, opportunity is given for thus exalting our Lord. We possess our treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. And I believe that every foundation-truth, on which we are taught to rest, is learnt experimentally through such

knowledge of our own impotency and vileness. Internal warfare necessarily belongs to souls regenerated by the Holy Ghost, who receive a new creation, animated by its Creator with affections and principles that will fight against those of darkness; and the kingdom of darkness being so assailed will, of course, be raised up in uproar, and the energies of the old man be in action against the new. We know that it is not the intention of our Lord to *amend* the *old* nature, which "is not subject to the law of God, neither *indeed can be*;" but rather to triumph over it, in the introducing of that victorious existence, through which we crucify the flesh, and in which we shall be able to glorify God. Blessed be His name, in this sense "the elder shall serve the younger," and the Esau of the flesh be supplanted by the Jacob of the Spirit! Such a revelation is supporting, under the continuance of the conflict, and we derive from the covenant-promise animating motives to persevering hope; so that, even in moments of dreary consciousness of indwelling sin, or of prospects of painful and humiliating kind, we can still exclaim—"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, though I fall I shall arise." What a blessing it is to be built up in sound doctrine! We know not the extent of the blessing; but we taste somewhat of it, when, sorely pressed by temptation or tried by inward or outward agitations, we find in the midst of all, a provision in *such* doctrine for every necessity, and for the staying of the soul.

Perhaps there is no part of our Lord's office-character which is more difficult of apprehension than that of *justifying righteousness* for his people. It is comparatively easy to admit it in *terms*; but the self-righteous leaven, which works in us all, stands ever opposed to the faith of appropriation in this particular; and we find, if we examine the matter, that either we are op-

posed to it in a formal dependance upon our own duties, or in a subtle expectation of comfort, &c. &c., from our own frames, feelings, measure of faith, or sanctification. Ah! how like an angel the adversary can sometimes appear—and with what imposing flatteries too often deceive us, and lead our unwary souls into paths that are dark! Let us labour, my beloved ——, to maintain *simplicity*, and bless our Lord that he maintains it in us, although sometimes by very painful discoveries of our own weakness. As to growth in holiness, which we are constrained to pant after, this is best promoted by simple adherence to Christ, since acceptable fruit is produced through *union with Him*, and in proportion to our derivation of the Spirit from Him. So Jesus taught, saying, “He that abideth in me, the same bringeth forth much fruit.” May God the Spirit give himself forth unto us with increasing power, so that body, soul and spirit may be a living offering to Him who died for us, and lives for us!

I trust, my dear ——, that you are keeping in remembrance all the glory of that standard which is exhibited to us in the gospel, and that as we have in many past blessed days taken sweet counsel together on these cheering truths, so now in the Spirit we continue to realize the one baptism which will always make us to experience *these words*, “*It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Lord.*” O how much is contained in them! We know also that they are not vain words; for that it is also written, “As he was, so are we in this world.” Now what he was in a lot of suffering, and what he was in opposition to the spirit of this world, we know; and although, of course, the measure must remain in its infinite eternal *difference*, as it respects the excellence of the head or of the members, there will be an exact *correspondence* in the *likeness*, since we are

created anew, after the *image of Him* that createth us. Be not induced, my love, by any sophistical arguments of men, of the flesh, or of unsound professors, to deviate from this standard. The mark is set before us ; let us press unto it, that so we may magnify our God on earth, and have an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom ministered to us.

I rejoice to read in your last of the intention you and my dear —— have of coming to H——. I believe it would be of use to you both in respect to bodily health, and certainly we may hope so likewise in the vastly more important health of the soul. Your own usual means will possibly be found with its ancient sweetness. It appears that the Holy Spirit does acknowledge, in an especial manner, such instruments as have been used by Him for gathering in the soul ; and the expression of the church, “when I have found him I will bring him to my mother’s house,” seems to agree with this idea. He is indeed an omniscient, omnipresent Friend, and *feeds* us *every where* ; but to individuals there is an individual *experience*, which frequently rises particularly into enriching demonstration under one particular ministration. May we find it so, dear love, whenever we may be restored to one another !

Your future final abode seems left by you without any direct intention in your minds. I would not influence you contrary to what might seem to be a providential leading ; but of course I would desire your return to your *home*, for so I call our beloved Knaresborough. We are, at least hitherto, so mercifully preserved from the tumultuous billows on which the church is tossed in many other places, and are kept in so much of *domestic enjoyment* in the flock, (if I may so express myself) that it seems specially favoured ; and as in every respect we are bound to *pitch our tents* by wells

of water and where palm-trees grow, we ought to calculate for this in the first place,—“ Seek first the kingdom of God.” In the present day, there is also an especial call for decision and watchfulness. Soon our Lord will more visibly enter into the fearful last controversy with his *enemies*, and with the *slumbering* in the church ; and dreadful is the thought of not being found vigorously his, and unquestionably under his banner.

The Lord direct you, my beloved children, and let the cloud and the pillar be seen ; and be you, I beseech you, willing and obedient.

M. S.

CLVIII.

Family Sickness—Proportioned Comfort—Unchanging Mercy-seat.

As I know not, my beloved brother, when you may receive this little messenger, and shall, please God, write to you next Wednesday,—I enter into no particulars of the circumstances which encompass us here at this time. It is sufficient to say they are occasions for the exercise of faith, and call forth the expression of momentary dependence.

Sickness has long prevailed under our roof, and we have reason to suppose will continue. Our dear invalid is under an attack of illness which is more serious than we at first apprehended ; and as my dear sister also is ill, I am much engaged in nursing. I will tell you more in my letter. That your spirit is with us, my beloved friend, I do not doubt ; and we are sure you unite with us in earnest prayer. His life, I trust, will

be mercifully spared, for the sake of those great interests which, so far as this little flock is concerned, are so much connected with it.

Abiding in this vale of tears, the present visitation is rendered more afflictive on account of other considerations respecting the state of the vineyard. But O how great is our privilege to be able to cast our burden upon the Lord, and to feel that in proportion to the extent of trial is the impartation of comfort from the inexhaustible source of eternal love. No doubt our Lord brings us into situations of extremity purposely to enrich us spiritually. I am sure I can say this of all past dispensations; and your heart, my beloved friend, will echo back the testimony. O may we prolong the blessed theme from day to day; and whatever awaits us in this world, be joyful in Him who will not fail us—whose name is Love! It is long since my feet were bent to the public sanctuary; and I have still some weeks before me ere the time of my appointed seclusion is expired. It will on many accounts be affecting to me to enter the Lord's house again,—alas! in some respects, so affectingly changed in its circumstances. But let us remember how we have our unchanging mercy-seat, a refuge in every distress and a rest even amidst tumultuous waves; and in this portion, my dear friend, let us be gratefully satisfied!

You will be glad that I am better in health;—I think perfectly restored, as to my lungs; but confinement makes me liable to little ailments, which, I think, will not be when I am more in the air. I feel very thankful that I can *nurse*; so good is the Lord in raising up one as he depresses another. Think of us continually in your supplications, and offer thanks also for the mercies which abound in trial.

My true and tender love to all your dear valued

precious associates ;—nature would say too soon taken away, but grace says, all is well.

I am ever your most affectionate sister,

M. S.

CLIIX.

Visit to E.—Probable Remove—State of Mind—Zeal for Souls—Placid Acquiescence—The only settled Comfort—Despondency dishonouring—Our only World—Memorial.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

WE have had great solicitude, since I last wrote, on our invalid's account ; his loss of voice seemed to be quite fixed, and a great return of debility filled us with expectation that our first apprehensions would quickly be realized. But again our Lord has in mercy granted a little revival to his frame, and He will, we trust, continue this mercy at least for the summer months ; for it is evident how greatly he is affected by every change of weather.

You will be surprised when I tell you that although he has been thus visited by a return of his weakness, he has been to E—— for a week, whither Maria and I accompanied him. Necessity was laid upon him, consequently he resolved upon going over ; and as the journey would have been very fatiguing to my sister, it was better I should go. I think the change of air, and the remarkable quiet of E—— during the few days we were there, may have been of service ; and certainly the place is altogether so much milder in atmosphere, that probably he felt the influence. I think so also because he found the difference of the sharp wind when we

ascended the hill at K——. And now, my beloved brother, since I have spoken upon this subject, I will proceed until I have given you some idea of our present circumstances and prospects. First, I must cheer you with tidings of merciful relief on the ground of ministerial cares. This affords us a better opportunity for deliberation respecting our own arrangements. Do not be surprised if I repeat my idea that possibly God may be directing our way to E——. I should once have started at the supposition as at the sight of an unwelcome visitant. But the Lord always imparts dispositions which correspond with his dispensations; and I fall into his will as clay in the hands of the potter.

As it respects our dear Mr. C——, we agree that every effort should be made to adopt the means which may be used for his continuance in this life, since so many great and important interests are involved in his remaining the head of these places. As to work, he is wholly unable to do any, and ought not to be thrown into the situation which might induce him to exert his voice. On his account E—— is in every way desirable. Then we have to consider pecuniary things. The expence of three regular curates will be heavy; and the increase of demand in this respect must be met by some sacrifice somewhere also. E—— would afford the opportunity for doing this; so that in fact the same ministering streams would be continued as they are now, although the increase of expenditure to curates must be incurred.

I well know, my dear friend, what at this time rises in your heart. You are ready to ask, what then will become of the proportion of labour given by me and my dear little companion? and this has been a point of serious discussion with us all; but we think an arrangement might be made by which our work would rather

be increased than circumscribed. Should we remove, we should of course either let or sell S——, for it would be a care to us were it retained; we should then occupy the school, I mean M——, and I when at K——. We should divide our time between the flock at K—— and at E——, under such regulations as, I think, would not be any detriment to our influence or work of love. I many times think that the Lord has some sheep in that hitherto unprofitable region in the parish of E——, after whom we are ordained to seek, and possibly all this trial is for the end of giving us some precious souls of his elect in that place. If so, trial is a privilege indeed, and I am thankful for all the affliction.

During our short abode at E—— we had a little intimation that a door of acceptance might be opened. M—— gathered a little flock of interesting children together on Sunday evening, and they evinced great interest and wishes to come the next night. I occupied myself by visiting some sick and poor people in whom there was a strong emotion excited, and one poor woman who was waiting upon the sufferer wept much as we talked of the loving compassions which Jesus shews to sinners. I returned from my evening engagement, I trust, with deep and devotional feelings—feeling the value of one poor soul, and calling to mind how our dear master traversed the earth and walked in many a desert place to gather up his own! I felt as I entered our own dwelling that happiness truly consists in fellowship with our soul's beloved, and that any place is home where Jesus is! Thus it is, my brother, that we learn to bring natural feeling to his dear feet; and that personal desires and affections are lost in the more sublime and blessed gratification flowing from love of the will of our heavenly guide.

How rapidly have dispensations succeeded each other

which are called *painful* if nature's voice is heard ; but by which we have been brought experimentally to know that we have a portion beyond this life, for the enjoyment of which our Lord is preparing us by daily exercises here. My own heart was greatly affected by the 131st Psalm, which I had the last teaching. It speaks my own soul's experience. I have felt what it is to be *weaned* as a child through suffering discipline ; and I have felt the meaning of the phrase, I have *quieted* myself. We are always requiring the aid of faith, by which holy reasonings are brought in to strengthen and hush the soul into peace ; and especially during the last two years, I may say, this has been the requirement and the exercise of my inmost soul. Oh ! my beloved friend, will not your heart beat responsively with mine upon this subject, and confess that we are hourly called to put forth these expressions of our supernatural existence in this vale of sorrows. It is our consolation, however, that the whole government rests upon the shoulder of him who is omnipotent and faithful. Tumultuous scenes and rising passions must own his sway, and that unchangeable love of his heart will secure us in the midst of every storm. Let us be weaned from all expectations, but such as centre in Jesus, and quiet ourselves by calling to mind that nothing can sever us from his love. Surely this is our only settled comfort, for we have domestic sorrows, worldly cares, national disorders, and church distractions, which must overwhelm us, unless we are *simple* ; but if simple, then we have rest, and our buoyant hope and faith shall still ride safely in the swelling wave.

I fear nothing so much as looking with distrust or despondency on any event of time, because I am sure if I do I dishonour my Lord ; it is as if we forgot his rule

and lost sight of his promise. O may we never be thus inconsistent with our vows and our high relation—but even when nothing but darkness is around, still sing his praises and know that he is near! Let us use this privilege and always be animating one another to look with unshaken confidence and love to the everlasting rock. Never yet did I so much feel that I am a stranger here; I seem in very deed to have no abiding city below, and thanks be to our dear Lord, I wish for none. To go or come, to live or die, to labour or rest, is welcome according to the divine command. And O what ought we not to render to the Lord for the afflictions which, having broken the heart, have in that blow given a death-stroke to the kingdom of darkness and rebellion within.

What a wonderful and indescribable sensation that is in the heart, which we experience when all is *sad*, yet all is *exhilarated*. This is my habitual frame now, perhaps I never so much realized the painfulness of life, yet never possessed so much unbroken peace! It seems to me as if there were two worlds within me, one attended with clouds, and earthquake, and storm; the other exhibiting a cloudless peaceful sky, and blessed it is that in the latter the soul delights and is permitted to live. How unspeakably precious is the nearer approaching hour, when our only world will be *our God*—our all his manifested love!

Be not surprised, my beloved fellow-pilgrim, that with these feelings I am made contented to relinquish even my dwelling-place in the quiet congregation and vineyard of this place—my heart is weaned. Although I dearly love this long-favoured and hallowed scene, better is it, (however we may delight in our best possessions,) to say, Be it unto me according to thy mind.

Do not wish me to give any memorial of myself.

You know, my beloved brother, that my heart's desire is to be forgotten so far as the creature is concerned, and only to be remembered when I am gone, by the recollection that the Lord used me for such and such gracious purposes. When we stand around the throne, I shall be seen a monument of grace—I shall be heard an enraptured singer of the new eternal song—till then I have no desire to be conspicuous.

To you I can freely speak of my experience ; the Lord appointed us to each other for holy refreshment in this kind of communion, but I would circumscribe my observations upon my own exercises within this boundary. When I write to you I speak out of the fulness of my heart in the full persuasion that yours glows with similar and congenial sentiments ; but every day renders me more and more *shut up* as to my private and personal feelings. There are very few you can call *a friend*, and to none but such an one would I open my heart.

* * * * *

I will write you every particular of E—— should we go ; the few sheep in the wilderness are very dear to Christ ; we will not faint ; as yet we are not resolved, it depends much on Mr. C——'s state. Farewell, my dear friend, give our united and tender love to all your dear ones. Sweet was the transitory fellowship by the way. O bid them all press to the one abiding home.

Your ever affectionate sister and friend,

M. S.

CLX.

Wilderness Consolation—Privilege identified—Communion cultivated—Shelter of Tree of Life—Doubtful Position—Avocations—Ministry—Thankful Sympathy.

I THANK you, my beloved friend, for the last communication from your hand, which met me as I was sitting in solitude in my room at the school, waiting the return of M——. It found me in a frame of mind prepared to enter fully into its contents, and to experience a sympathetic flow of feeling like unto that by which it was dictated. Every day's experience of the nature of transitory things, and every renewed evidence we have of the instability of some dispositions, seems to stamp a double value upon what we have reason to believe is abiding and unshaken. May we always thus feel in praises to Him who is pleased of His own will to ordain for us the proportion of wilderness consolation which is most suitable to our spiritual health !

To us, my friend, there do not exist any real consolations but what are impregnated with our hopes in the covenant. Whatever is proposed to us of enjoyment must fail of imparting it, unless our soul's beloved is there,—and this, I think, is one of the sweetest tokens that He is chief in our affections, since all places or interests are dull and insipid without Him, and all circumstances or situations wear a smiling aspect, if He is there. Surely this is *love!*

How delightful it is to realize these blessed operations of grace, and how profitable to put ourselves upon identifying, as it were, our own existence as saints and heirs of the promise ! Whilst writing these sentiments a glowing emotion passes my breast, like the indwelling

Comforter's touch, by which He certifieth to the truth of the sentence, as if He responded—surely this is love !

What indescribable communion is thus carried on between the Lord and our souls, quite unseen by those around us, and has no voice save that which passes between the one spirit and the Lord. But by this we have that unspeakable privilege, for which we constantly pray, of maintaining the life of faith, walking in the Spirit.

No doubt, were we more watchful over the movements of the new man within us we might more frequently be indulged by the powerful visitation of this divine presence of our Lord. Let us therefore, my beloved friend, diligently devote ourselves to this cultivation of momentary communion with our Lord. So far as outward circumstances can contribute to produce such a disposition, I think we are both *favourably* situated: Trials of various kinds encompass our paths, and we have exercises of a conflicting nature even in the things of our God. But these are all exceedingly powerful instruments towards spiritualizing the mind ; and when, by the mercy of our Lord, they are divested of their natural tendency to irritate or to depress, they become as strong gales, filling our sails and bearing our vessel in triumph above the swellings of human things. Is not our Lord worthy to receive blessing, and honour, and praise, seeing he so skilfully displays his infinite wisdom and grace in behalf of such souls as ours, which would otherwise sink in the mighty seas ? 'Tis almost surprising to myself how calm and peacefully assured my soul is kept in this day of exercise—trial it has been, and is one of much trial still—yet I seem to forget that the burden exists, so mightily does Jesus bear it for me. I sit under his shadow and the boughs of this tree of life spread themselves so widely and are so richly

covered with sheltering foliage and sustaining fruit, that I scarcely have an eye to look out beyond, for well I know that he will regulate and govern all beyond, and will not let any thing arise to harm the favoured soul that rests beneath his care.

As to the lot which awaits us respecting our future labours, we are as much in the dark as before you received my last. We know not what may be determined respecting us; but I trust that we are all in a waiting and a willing mind. Our removal to E—— would unquestionably greatly lessen our expenditure. I am saying this in answer to your reasonable enquiry—not that this house would entail any greater expences than must be encountered anywhere, but *innumerable accompaniments* upon being here would be avoided. We have come to no decision—we are disposed to wait till so directed, as may leave us no future distraction or doubt as to the mind of our Lord.

The dispensation, as far as respects myself, is very mysterious, for I am *strong* for my work, the people are fervently desirous to receive my labours. I now have two meetings in the week, the one on Monday, the other on Thursday evenings, and have private meetings continually,—one also on Sunday noon, of old people, in my room downstairs, and one at half-past five, till lecture-time, of apprentices. This last is very interesting. I give them a subject for consideration during the week, on which they are to repeat each one text found by themselves. We meet with a hymn—then the texts repeated—then I give a short exposition of the subject—then catechize them upon it, and after this they ask me any questions they deem desirable. Last Sunday I had more than thirty young men. Pray for a blessing upon this endeavour, my beloved friend. You would be gratified to witness the gladness with which they

seem to assemble. I sometimes think were you here now, when I have more time for these relative engagements and am better in health so as to pass through them with comfort, how sweetly we should work together, and how we might strengthen each other's hands. But I immediately correct this reflection, and turn it into prayer and praise ; and know that by Jesus' arrangements we are always enriched.

The last letter tells me Mr. C—— is looking a little better—that he had made an effort to read up some book to my sister, but this he could not do. But we will be thankful, and bless our dear Lord for the preservation of his valuable life thus far !

I am looking forward to the next few months with expectation of much engagement, knowing that many old friends are preparing to come to H—— this summer. I feel being *alone* very much, when I think of such kind of duties awaiting me ; but in all things, my beloved friend, we must stand prepared for daily acceptance of the Lord's daily work ; sure we are that He will likewise give daily strength.

Now I must tell you of ——'s ministry, for I think you love to be with us in all things. He is very promising, being apparently very upright ; he has an uncommonly pleasing manner in the pulpit, and is very courteous out of it, so that most people are immediately prepossessed in his favour. His voice too is sufficient to fill the whole church, with utmost ease to his hearers. In doctrine he is very high, *intending*, I am sure, the pure truth, but occasionally he has been incautious in terms, arising evidently from inexperience and want of a nicely discriminating judgment in the distinctions subsisting between separate doctrines—he does not, I think, clearly see what belongs to assurance, what to adoption, what to election, &c., so as to state them

with the precision one would desire; but he will improve, I trust, in this. I often, on his account, grieve that Mr. C—— is absent; he just wants such an one to advise him. I listen with an affectionate but almost painful solicitude, and shall rejoice when the Lord is pleased to send him an advanced associate.

My paper is filled before I calculated, and has left me with the necessity of breaking off with feelings half untold. I must tell you, however, how affectionately I bear my tribute of praise to the Lord for His blessed manifestations to my dear Mrs. ——, my sister in the sweet hope of Jesus. Tell her it is a cordial to my soul to hear how she is blessed, and that she has entered on the Lord's blessed work; she will find in it the promise fulfilled, "they that water shall be watered;" and I know that in proportion to her simple delight in the work of the Lord will be her own individually increased blessing. Blessings you see, my beloved friend, are mercifully and richly shed upon you, so that although we have clouds, we have sunbeams also, and even the clouds drop down fatness. O may you ever dwell under these descending testimonies of covenant love, and all your dear children receive of the shower, and exhibit the rejoicing effects of the heavenly blessing.

Give my tender love to all. To yourself, my beloved friend, take the portion which my heart freely gives, of those holy affections which the Lord Jesus has given us to experience, and believe me always in Him, &c.,

M. S.

CLXI.

Testimony to the Lord—Associate—Contentment of Heart—Assurance of Faith animating—Writing of Comments concluded.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I AM always sure of the faithful sympathy that will come to me from your heart; and this was one reason why I found it a precious relief to unburden my soul to you in my last. Since that letter you will be very sure that a variety of exercises have been endured;—but when I open this theme, I would begin and end it with a testimony to the faithfulness of my beloved Lord, in whom I have sweetly reposed, and whose loving hand has many times arrested the tears that would have flowed.

Under my circumstances, it has been a peculiar relief to retire and tell my many feelings to my eternal and bosom friend. I say peculiar, because from the domestic connections I am in, and the evident decline of our beloved invalid, it was requisite for me to keep my own feelings silent in the debate, and to let judgment and faith act with simplicity. We think it possible, that as summer advances he may bear this air until winter approaches,—we may then think of a warmer atmosphere for those months.

Thank you, my beloved friend—thank all of you, my dear ones, for your affectionate wish to give us a welcome under your roof; full well I know, from my own heart, how true that welcome would be. This is one of the few human things of which I feel entirely assured. Everything belonging to the bonds which made us feel so united when here, is a pledge that it is an everlasting union.

Mr. —— would have been a very agreeable associate : his openness and simplicity are quite beautiful features ; and although he wants experience, he is very acceptable to the people, who receive him with affection. He has a powerful voice, a pleasing manner, is courteous and affable, talks in the kindest way to every one who may fall within his reach, rich or poor, and carries about him a something which attracts confidence and affection.

As to my own appointment, my beloved friend, my soul has been maintained in simple reliance and satisfaction with whatever the divine will may reveal. We know that all the events which belong to the redeemed are ordained by a rule of infinite wisdom and love ; and were there no further result to look to, but the exercising of the life of faith, the blessing of being governed by such a Lord is unspeakable. I have great reason to be thankful for the particular mode of my own individual exercises, and for that influence which has attended me from my first call to the cross. It has been the good pleasure of the Lord to awaken me to perhaps a singular degree of *tenderness* in the nature of my spiritual experience. I cannot but be sensible of this ; and that it is an act of surprising grace, by which natural tendencies have been sanctified to the highest objects ; and affections, which if left without the hallowing unction of the covenant, must have driven me into sorrowful exercises in the earth, have been drawn to centre in the only true source of happiness. This has been and is a precious means, producing a contentment of heart if only I have Jesus with me, whatever be the afflictive dispensations which belong to pilgrimage. And in the blessed calling to relative labour I feel the same operation, so that if I am sure it is His will, I am as happy to close my course in a retired region, unknown or forgotten, as I am to be used in the most

public scenes. Thanks be to God for this spirit. O may the Holy Ghost deepen and cherish it in all simplicity!

Is it not our duty and privilege to tell to each other what the Lord hath done to our souls? Yes, surely; and I will not conceal from my brother these animating, consolatory truths, which are all precious fruits of the covenant.

I find nothing so animating, to suffer and obey, as the *assurance* of faith. We have often agreed upon this as we have sat in this little room together; and I am sure we shall abide in the sentiment with an increase of conviction from all that we have experienced since last summer.

And now I must tell you that I have finished my writing part of the Comments. *I am glad and sorry.* I am glad, because it is well to have been spared in strength and leisure for the completion of what I had begun in the Lord, and I am hereby made more at liberty for whatever may remain to do—either to live or die. And I am sorry, because it is like bidding farewell to a blessed friend from whom I have received much edification and comfort. The work has been a blessing to me, leading me into many sweet pastures, and into the loved company of my Lord. But the pastures still are near, and my Lord is still ready to be gracious. * * * I am glad you described the situation of your sweet abode. I can now picture all of you in your several movements with some accuracy, and I trust soon to behold you all with my own eyes. I say soon; but I think I shall abide here this summer,—it may be my last for working in this vineyard, and I am animated with an earnest desire to use it under this impression.

No more room remaining, I am obliged to drop my pen. Most faithfully your sister in the Lord,

M. S.

CLXII.

Bearing the Cross—Constant Inhabitant—Submissive Will—Developements of natural Mind—Objects spiritualized.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

MY whole heart has sympathized with you in the interesting detail of what has occurred since you last wrote, and I rejoice in the privilege granted you of bearing and exulting in the Cross. One such moment, illumined by the manifestation of Jesus to the soul, is more valuable than thousands under the influence of mere natural enjoyments. I have been in this pathway, my dearest friend, in many past scenes of my pilgrimage, and therefore can well understand all which you would feel, when thus cast out for the name of the Lord.

Surely our Lord delights to make use of such moments as his favourite time for demonstrating his love : I was going to say, for visits to the soul ; but I corrected the thought, for we have him as a constant inhabitant of our breast ; and his consolations proceed from the *expression* of that which is in fact always and habitually with us. This is a very cheering consideration ;—I frequently delight my soul with this recollection, and have an unspeakable joy when feeling conscious that in public or private my dear Saviour is my indwelling companion, with whom I may in all situations converse. Will not your heart, my beloved friend, respond to this sentiment, and participate with me in the precious privilege ? O how much more of stable peace should we experience as believers, were we all animated by this recollection ; for surely such a truth

firmly believed would prove an antidote to the various miseries which arise out of human scenes! Waves obey him, and he has only to say, "Peace, be still," and immediately there is a great calm. O beloved friend, let us give Him the glory that is due, and confess that He never has failed thus to exercise his covenant power in *our* behalf. Shall we not confide in Him for all that remains? Yes, beloved fellow-sufferer, we will yield him implicit confidence, and ever be kissing the hand that either gives or denies what we ask:—in both cases he is Love; and as one whom his mother comforteth, so will He comfort us. What can we need more?

I am now writing to you from my dear little room at the school, where we have interchanged so many of our christian hopes, and have strengthened each other through sweet communion: and whilst I experience a degree of sacred sadness in the reflection that these moments are gone, I lift up a grateful expression of thanks that they ever existed. That you are now placed in another part of his vineyard must not distress us, if we see that the Lord had need of you. "Loose him and let him go," is the divine requirement, and our will lies submissive at his feet.

The few instances you have, amidst the opposition of sinners, that the Lord is with you to bless your testimony, must convince us that you had a work ordained for you in your present lot. Painful accompaniments do not prevent our seeing and rejoicing in this; and I trust that your word will be owned yet more and more, in the fulness of the blessing of the covenant. It is probably necessary that when a divine blessing is given, through the instrumentality of men, there should at the same time be seen in full developement what the natural mind is in its enmity to the Gospel. Hereby the work

is rendered more conspicuously of God, and the worker is kept in simple dependence and in the exercises of faith. Is not this *very good?*

The rain is at this moment pouring down from the clouds—the river is very high—yet I listen to the voice of the dove in the long walk, and the animated sounds of innumerable birds all singing in the midst of the storm, and enjoying the shelter in the rich foliage. Thus whilst I am conversing with you, I have likewise another sweet exercise, and am thinking how powerfully these outward sounds address me in the inward man. It is not in the nature of spiritual affections to sink or be silenced by any external trial. The voice of the turtle is still heard in our land, and even under the torrents of descending trials we still experience how truly we are sheltered. Are we not favoured unutterably in having such a new and wonderful world opened to us, and in having also the power to realize how its treasures are ours, whatever be the lot we have in things which are temporal? Be comforted, my beloved brother, in every trial of yours. Unspeakable mercies have waited upon your steps, and still will wait upon them; and even through tearful eyes we can look upon the bow in the cloud, and will bless our heavenly guide who leads us in wisdom and truth.

It has pleased God to confirm the degree of amendment in Mr. C——'s health, which I mentioned in my last, so far as to lead to the hope he may be enabled to do a little during the summer. It will rejoice you that he is able to appear among the people again, who testify their affection and gratitude, nor can I by description give you an idea of the effect of his first sermon, which he opened by an affectionate address upon the circumstances which had tried him and them in the expected separation. You will also rejoice that the congregations

are crowded, and the Lord's table very increasingly so. Thus we begin to witness the result of those painful events which are past, wherein the people, I believe, have learnt some salutary lessons, and we also have been purified. I could wish that as you were our loved companion in the hour of need, you might have been likewise in this passing sunshine.

Your affectionately attached sister and friend,

M. S.

CLXIII.

Examination of Children—Secret Influence—Standard of Experience similar—Divine Sovereignty.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I GLADLY beheld your letter laid upon the table last night, after a scene of the utmost excitement in which we had been engaged. How much you would have delighted had you been present to witness the interesting sight.

As I have so immediately touched upon this subject, I will not pass away from it without first giving you a short sketch of what I allude to, since as all your heart I know beats in nearest association with us in our Master's work, it must needs be gratifying to hear how the Lord is *with* us in that work.

We had an examination of three hundred girls from M—'s school, which was determined on in consequence of a little passing conversation respecting an expected confirmation. In speaking of the arrangements for the children who might give in their names

for this object, she said to Mr. C——, “I wish some time you would have an examination of mine in the church, it perhaps would excite the parents.” This produced a little discussion, ending in a *purpose*, and it was fixed to take place in a fortnight.

I will now give you some notion of the method, and then I am sure your spirit will enter fully into the accompanying feelings which were called forth in us all. We met in the church at half-past six; the girls were all placed in the gallery, filling it completely up to the organ. The church was crowded, and the aisle as full as possible. When all were settled, Mr. —— opened the organ, and the children all burst out in one loud and sweet voice, singing a hymn. When it was closed, Mr. C—— addressed the congregation, most affectingly shewing the blessing of training the lambs, and expressing his own gratitude for the sight before him. He then turned towards the gallery of children, and commenced the examination. It was arranged in a very interesting form. The characters of Christ formed the first branch, as we have them in that beautiful hymn, of Watts—“Go worship at Emmanuel’s feet;”—each character was proved from scripture. Then a scripture lesson, or larger portion of the word was repeated upon the same subject, and so on through the whole, *every voice* speaking at once, and so full and orderly as to appear like one; but lest there should be any difficulty to the congregation in distinguishing the words, one girl was appointed to recapitulate the whole. I should have told you that previously to this part of the engagement we sang Handel’s anthem, from “He shall feed his flock.” The next thing was a free examination by questions from Mr. C——, upon doctrines, graces, prophecies, and types; the whole being concluded with a short address to the children, and the beautiful anthem

we have to the words, "Plunged in a gulf," in which all the children united, so that the whole church resounded with the sounds.

It was almost too much to bear. My own heart was overpowered, and every one else appeared to be affected in a similar way. Tears were plentifully shed, especially when the class of *very* little children spoke, repeating the 23rd Psalm, some of them only four years old. My own mind was so much excited that I could not close my eyes until the morning. The beautiful appearance of so many young ones gathered out of the world, modest yet confident—the gratification evident in the faces of the several teachers, and the humility of some of the elder girls, who like little ones repeated their texts,—this scene, associated with the coming assembly when Jesus shall gather in his own from the face of the world—the thought of my own dear M—, as honoured by the Lord with such a calling—and many other affecting considerations crowded upon my heart. But I am quite sure that yours, my brother, will enter into my feelings better by those of your own breast than by any words of mine. We said as we returned home, how *you* would have enjoyed this blessed engagement. Perhaps when we have another it may please God to bring you to the spot, and make you a companion in the sacred enjoyment. But however the Lord may deal towards us in this respect, we can rejoice in knowing that a very few more occupations belonging to earth will end our conflicting and labouring days, and bring us into the great and final congregation of the blessed in the perfection of our joys.

Tell your dear ones of this little delight we have had. M— J— will have a wish, I trust, that she could have been amongst the workers who were present; but tell her she may, by the divine blessing, begin in the

same steps where she is ; and if herself a *consecrated* one, she may look for the witnessing presence of the Spirit in all she has and all she does.

What happiness is there, my beloved friend, that can be compared with the smiles which Jesus gives us as we traverse our way ; and Oh ! who would not be a consecrated one, since in fellowship with our souls' beloved "labour is rest," and even "sorrows smile!" The more I experimentally understand of this life's afflictive character, so much the more I appreciate the hiding-place of Jesus' breast ; and we will never complain, my friend, of any rough wind or tempest if only it causes us to cling closer to the bosom of our Lord. If it hath pleased our God to baptize us with affliction, and to associate us with himself in a path of painful exercise, we know likewise that He has designs to *enrich* us through this medium ; and as we love spiritual possessions above all other treasure, we have nothing to ask but that the divine guidance may determine all our steps.

My own spirit, beloved fellow-pilgrim, is under a constant secret influence, which I should describe as *mournful*, and yet it is *lively*. Is this an irreconcileable contradiction? Can you not understand the nature of my feelings ? I am sensible of sorrow, but I would not have *one* thing altered respecting any part of my lot or dispensation.

I enter, my dear brother, into every sentiment expressed in yours with truest sympathy. We have the ability to understand those secret movements of the heart by an internal and intimate acquaintance with them. And, blessed be the Lord, we know their *use*, and how by such operations and through such feelings, the *Sanctifier* is rising in triumph within us, and renewing the whole man into love of the Eternal Will.

How wonderful and mysterious are the methods of

grace! how faithful and undeviating the purpose of love! Surely we are satisfied that they are all *excellent*; and we will quietly wait the accomplishment of all the everlasting decree.

I think, my beloved friend, that your soul is under the same dispensation as my own. You speak of my greater measure of simplicity and devotion,—perhaps we come to the very same standard, although there may be some little variation as to the steps which lead us there. Conflict we both have, for there is no high attainment without it; but the victory also we have, for we each of us can sincerely say, “here is my *rest*”—“this is all my *desire*.” In this possession we are distinguished alike; and our dearest Lord is magnified by bringing every wish of the heart to His feet, there to remain a willing sacrifice to Him; and now when we are in various ways called to demonstrate the truth of these sweet overflowings of sentiment, we can, blessed be God, display his faithfulness who always will perfect his strength in our weakness.

How much my spirit rejoices that the Lord is pleased to associate us in work in the way you so affectionately express. I am always very thankful that my book is owned in the quarters you mention. I agree with you, having always found that class of people most difficult of access upon spiritual things; which is one reason why, as I have often said to you, a village did not appear to me the most desirable scene for labour. But we learn every day how entirely the day of power is with the Lord, and how sovereignly he makes choice of his own subjects, on whom to bestow his grace. When He works, who shall let it?

You must give for me a return of love to the interesting man you mention. Tell him that my heart has offered up a tribute of thanks to God that we are

brought to feel the union which God's children are to experience here and for ever, and that I pray God to perfect this when He shall gather all his redeemed home! Tell him also that *I do* hope and expect to see him; for it is my desire to behold you all in your present little scene of interest. Our own affairs, my friend, have been in such outward uncertainty ever since you left us, that I have had no power to speak upon any *design*. I have felt like an entire stranger and pilgrim, with no certainty of any thing; and even now my heart is backward to admit the hope of a *speedy* meeting, because I believe I am to be kept for awhile in this condition of dependance for the day. It is good to be so, my beloved brother—it keeps us in the exercise of faith and prayer; but rest persuaded, that when the Lord's providence will decide my steps, and shew me my way, there wants nothing of a full impulse of affection to place me in ——, where I may see you all once again, and again witness your labours, and listen to your testimony. I write in the midst of much hurry; at this moment I am scribbling to save the children going down to K——, that I may not disappoint your expectation of my letter; therefore, my beloved friend, farewell. With every affectionate remembrance to Mrs. ——, and all the beloved ones, I am your faithfully affectionate sister and fellow-pilgrim,

M. S.

CLXIV.

Place of Retreat—Prescribed Bounds—Subjects—Loss of Associate—Departure of young People.

I REJOICE, my dear brother, in the endeared experience of Jesus' love, which sheds its influence through your whole letter; and it is very sweet to me to perceive that close adhering love to Him in whom is all our life and peace. Whatever may come upon the poor pilgrim on his wearisome way, nothing can harm him whilst he is realizing his place of retreat; and amidst all the varied sorrows which exercise us here below, we never can be so storm-driven as not to feel our anchor and our rock the privilege and safety of our souls. Every day of my continuance here below renders this assurance more precious and sustaining, for every day brings with it its own proportion of trial. Blessed is our lot, for we are tried as the gold of the Lord, and He will bring us forth to His praise!

Truly, my brother, my own heart sometimes breathes a sigh after that state of perfection, which partakes of *anxiety* to be gone,—for it is far better to depart and be with Christ; but I check the importunate pleader, lest it should transgress those bounds prescribed it by covenant love, for the time and the way are best appointed by Him who will gather His own fruit at His own will. There is also around me an abundant testimony that the Lord has many gracious reasons for keeping me here; and when I look at my interesting little assembly in the school-room, I feel that it is a privilege to remain.

It would gratify your best and most affectionate feelings could you behold the loving-kindness of the Lord in this respect, for he did never more bountifully smile

upon my work, nor more graciously open a door which none can shut. I look back to the wonderful way in which he has led me, with new tributes of praise; and especially my spirit ponders the last dispensation attendant upon the two preceding years, with a mixture of admiration and seriousness. Wonders have multiplied upon me, such, my beloved friend, as are too many to tell, and such as never can be unfolded by the finite mind. We can however agree together in saying, whatever they are, whether bitter or sweet in their forms, *love* is inscribed upon them all.

As it respects the school, there are many dear pilgrims brought from H——, with whom there is communion in the Spirit, and many important points of truth have been discussed as bearing upon the present times, and the various evils which through these times seek to intrude themselves. I trust the Spirit of light and truth is with us.

My soul is increasingly solicitous to testify against the error which has caused so much grief as subversive of the true faith in Jesus; and having finished the Psalms, I have entered a course of subjects. * * *

Remember, my beloved brother, upon this subject in particular, to ask the Holy Ghost to rest upon me in His rich anointing. This is a commission which I know you will delight to fulfil. It will give you a sweet errand to the mercy-seat: and it will put you upon supplicating for that which I know your heart desires I should ever experience.

I have already had two meetings, the one embracing the *nature* of sympathy, and the assumption of a *holy* nature for this purpose by Christ,—the second treating on the *consecration* of that nature so assumed by the Lord; and I purpose in succeeding subjects to shew how his sympathy acts in the various situations which

require it. Thus you will have before you, my friend, the present engagements of Monday evening, and I am sure your spirit will be sweetly with us. * *

These are things which stimulate us, my dear friend, to increase in vigilance and in simple dependance upon the Holy Spirit, and His offices are rendered, by these examples, more precious and better understood.

We have had many here this year, anxiously enquiring into the error—and, thanks be to the Lord, viewing it in its true character. Thus whilst Satan is seeking to introduce his tares into the field, Jesus is keeping his wheat, and not one grain shall fall to the ground.

You will be sorry to hear that once again, Mr. C—— is in search of a curate for this place. It is a grief to all parties that he should be obliged to break up the present arrangement—but it is the will of God! —— is unable to remain on account of his health. He has endeavoured to maintain his post, with great resolution and faith, but he fails every day, both in appearance and strength, and, in my opinion, is in a decline. We grieve to lose him, because he is very acceptable to the people, and very agreeable to Mr. C—— in association.

How mysterious are the Lord's dealings sometimes,—*purposely* so no doubt, in order to try our faith and cheerful acquiescence in His government. It is good for us to be put into situations which make us act what we profess to believe; and since our motto is, "He hath done all things well," we must be kept up to the realizing sense of it, and *exhibit* also the sincerity with which we thus ascribe to Him all honour.

—— left us to-day; she is gone to take a school; some other of our girls are also called away into different situations, and we have been a little busy in sending them off—poor things!—it is like sending them out from a nest, and my heart feels a mixture of sadness with the

pleasure of providing for them, knowing how many are the evils they must meet. Jesus, however, is a Shepherd who will not fail them !

And now I will say farewell. It is near three o'clock in the morning. I found I could not keep my day without doing so. To-morrow I am to be incessantly engaged. I am sorry to find my dear Mrs. —— is looking poorly ; give my very true love to her, and tell her that I trust these outward appearances of delicacy are richly contrasted with internal strength. Give to all the beloved children a large portion of love from my heart—may they ever be with us in the best love. All here unite in truest remembrances. Believe me always, my beloved friend, your affectionate sister in the best bonds,

M. S.

CLXV.

Recumbency—The Mourner's Friend—Sanctified Exercises—Opening View of Prophecy—Discussions leading to the Bible—Speculative Enquiries—Private Examination.

THANK you, my beloved friend, for the ready enquiry you have made for us respecting the aid needed in this vineyard. I should gladly have received a letter furnished through the power you might have had to tell us something good on this point, and I was quite sure there was no reluctance either in your heart or hand to this employ. I therefore concluded, as you were silent, that no prospect of a suitable associate had opened in the quarter to which direction had been given.

I know you will feel affectionately solicitous for the people here, so far as we may admit any solicitude ; but

we never fail to experience that Jesus our Lord remembers us in the best time and way, therefore we will all continue recumbently to rest in Him. The sweetness of that pure and powerful place of repose is known in proportion to the multiplicity of the necessities which bring us there; and, very unlike to human resting-places, is found to be more abundant in its impartations of peace and relief the more it is pressed upon. O with what increase of grateful faith therefore should we cast our whole burden upon him, whatever that burden may be! You and I, my beloved brother, can say these things with emotions which demonstrate that we have learnt them experimentally. Thanks be to our Lord he has made us to drink deep into the tide of affliction and care, which is ever flowing in this painful world; and He has in so doing brought us into closer and more endeared acquaintance with all that he is as the mourner's friend. We therefore continually repeat the saying that we would not have been less tried; for he has known our souls in adversity, and has given us many a time the valley of Achor for the door of hope.

In my own experience there is a daily increase of this kind of blessed sentiment, and it appears to me as if things had been so ordered and sanctified in late years, as to commit me to a closer embrace in the arms of my covenant Lord, by such a manifestly gracious combination of trial with blessings, as forms a powerful bond by which to bind me indissolubly to that blessed dependence. Of course, my dear friend, you well know that I am looking to the strength of the everlasting arm alone to keep me in the Lord; but as he is pleased to make use of means towards effecting his will, I rejoice in finding that exercises of this description are thus sanctified.

Into these feelings you will largely enter, and find the reflection of what is passing in your own. This renders

our communion refreshing, and makes us able undisguisedly to utter each sentiment as it rises in our soul.

There are few things that could have given me more satisfaction and comfort than the interesting communication you make to me in your last letter respecting your view of prophecy. It perfectly gladdened my heart when my eyes ran over the lines, and my spirit offered a rapidly-ascending tribute of fervent praise on this account.

The difference of our thoughts upon this subject, my brother, never prevailed to throw a moment's shade upon our fellowship ; and, blessed be our Lord, we have always had the rich feast of fat things, and have always fed thereon, our Jesus being with us in all the way we were associated together; yet we are sensible that the further blessed agreement, which is now experienced in respect of this particular, will give another precious opening for pouring forth to one another our hope and desires, and expectations in the rapidly-coming glory of our Lord's manifestation. I have frequently directed my faith to this point, my beloved friend, and have offered my prayers, trusting that in the Lord's own time your reflections would be so called forth.

I did not wonder at the strong feeling awakened by the heated statements of ——; and I grieved to think that his late errors would necessarily tend to increase whatever of prejudice might assail your mind ; at the same time that I have been perfectly sure the Spirit would not withhold any part of a revelation wherein you should be enriched and comforted. Dear as you are to Him in that fellowship which is the result of an everlasting purpose, it must needs follow that he should reveal all things unto you : and certainly in this interesting subject there is so much of what affects us individually and experimentally, when it is embraced *script-*

turally, that I may well say it tends to enrichment and comfort.

I enter very fully into what you express of the joyful light which seems to be shed through this medium upon various parts of scripture. Indeed without this directive ray many passages appear in the midst of an impenetrable gloom; and as you express it, we are obliged to pass them by with a sort of trembling solicitude, which we scarcely dare investigate, lest it should lead us into distrust or doubt, or should in any way grieve the Spirit.

I think there can be no consideration more abundantly fraught with motives to exertion, and cheerful hope in the gospel work, than this blissful testimony of approaching glory to the blessed Head and redeemed members. It gives a kind of solidity to all we do, and a power of realizing the wonders to which we are approaching, whereby the affections become increasingly simple and weaned from the oppressive things of earth and sense.

As I dearly love your soul, your work, and all your present and future interests, I, of course, am exceedingly gladdened that the Holy Spirit has poured into your bosom, my brother, the precious streams flowing from the covenant by which Jesus is to be exalted as the second Adam, by whom shall be accomplished the glorious restitution, which will exhibit the faithfulness of divine purposes, and the triumph of divine rule above all the usurper's power.

We have had some very interesting discussions with many sincere enquiring friends during the past summer, leading us much into the Bible, and, I trust, proving the means of strengthening us by the way. On these occasions I call to mind how earnestly you delighted in such sweet engagements, and how you would still

rejoice to draw water with us out of the wells of salvation. It has pleased the Lord, however, to ordain otherwise, so far as immediate intercourse is concerned; and we have to take comfort in believing that he has so done in order to extend the blessings of salvation to a wider circle through your witness.

I observe what you say respecting the attraction to ——. It is true we have reason to lament the little of *spirituality* that is to be traced in many who are thus attracted; but we may hope that gradually a better savour may prevail in their affections. Alas! it is the prevalent feature of the day that sinners are satisfied with a pursuit of the religion of Jesus as a matter either of speculation, or merely as an interesting occupation of time, without understanding or receiving the testimony which introduces a spiritual kingdom into the heart. But prophecy teaches us to look for this; and probably this very circumstance will tend to bring out the hidden church more conspicuously to view, by putting her members upon zeal to demonstrate the difference between a name to live and real life. I find it so in my own soul. These things seem to address a mighty voice to the inward man, bidding the new creature to manifest its genuine character. And certainly it gives an energy and animation to the strain of charity which we address to others; helping to quicken us in speaking warning words of love,—always keeping this in mind, that the Lord's people shall be made willing in the day of his power.

It must be painful and trying to your spirit on the blessed day of rest to have to encounter the unprofitableness of persons not yet alive to these things; but be comforted, my beloved friend, Jesus our Lord had the same evils to meet, and we have to tread in his steps whatever they may be. Soon will the period come

when there will be no check to the pure and delightful interchange of sublimest thoughts and affections; and for this blessed close to present conflicts, we will look at the end of every trying intermediate day, saying with holy desire, "Thy kingdom come!"

We had a very interesting evening yesterday, which led out our meditations to the time of ingathering "when Jesus will collect his saved," and present them faultless before His throne. I was induced to accompany Mr. C—— and M—— to a private examination of —'s young ladies. We assembled at six and left them at ten, after having had a very gratifying evening; a spirit of piety running through their instructions, and the unaffected modesty which prevailed among forty-three sweet girls was very interesting, and many things in the course of the evening occurred that gratified our hearts. In this respect they are also rendered increasingly interesting to me as part of them being of my loved M——'s little flock, and to her it was a real gratification of the best kind. Mr. C—— addressed them at the close of the evening. There was something affecting in the sight of so many dear ones all drest alike in white; who are also brought under the means by which they may become acquainted with that fountain which makes the robes of the soul as white as snow; and I doubt not we all felt excited and united in prayer for a *saving* blessing upon them all.

You would rejoice to witness the degree of strength mercifully given to Mr. C——; he is not indeed by any means strong, yet he is wonderfully so considering what last winter presented to us. He is inclined to work too much, and we sometimes fear may be laid up by over-exertion; yet the increasing desire for spiritual possessions and instruction in the place will not admit of relaxation, excepting by absolute necessity; and we

trust the Lord will in mercy defend and strengthen him yet a little while as a shepherd to the beloved people. M—— is full of work, her schools increase very much, and amongst the dearest and most devoted of her young assistants is that dear ——, who is always labouring either with classes of children, or in visiting the sick. She never fails to mention you with gratitude, I saw her alone last week, and she again spoke of the blessing you had been to her in leading her soul into a state of greater liberty. You are sure it is a mutual pleasure thus to take a retrospect of the past, and to talk of your labours and of the blessing that rested upon them. * *

All unite in very truest love, it is indeed *very truest*. Give it also to our beloved Mrs. ——, and to all the dear loved children, thus it is that I am yours in the Lord,

M. S.

CLXVI.

Free Communion—Passing Interruptions—The Will weekly subdued—Preachers of Righteousness—The Labourer's supporting Doctrine—The Chambers of Abundance—Unspeakable Gratitude.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I THINK I told you that we had changed our night from Tuesday to Saturday. You who know the nature of that engagement, and how it is sometimes exhausting when a head-ache presses upon you, will understand that it was a pleasurable refreshment to my soul when I came down stairs, to see your letter laid upon the table. It rejoices me to hear of your proceedings, and to be assured that we meet in the Spirit, having precious fellowship in Him, notwithstanding the distance at which

we are placed. We are learning and enjoying more and more of our dear Lord's peculiar blessings, as we come nearer the fruition of our desires; and amongst these we must always rank the free communion by which streams are opened in the desert, and we are permitted to drink of living water.

I can well understand that the passing interruption which suspended your engagement, when about to write your last letter, would not be welcome,—but how grateful we may be thus to find in the daily occurrences of life that things of earth are *cumbersome* to us, and not our free and most delightful atmosphere. Sometimes I rejoice on such occasions, feeling that when they are discharged, my language is unfeignedly “Return unto thy rest, O my soul.” Perhaps we are continued amidst cares and interests of the world purposely to afford us, not only trial of our spirit, but a witness in the trial that this world is not our home. To this end we will strive to use our daily burdens of life. There is also much benefit derived by the constant demonstration we are called to give, that we have our will *meekly* subdued. It is comparatively easy to give up our own inclination from a sense of duty; but it is much more excellent when we can do so without discomposure, and fall in with the momentary vexations of the day with a quiet spirit. Sometimes I have found this a part to which my attention has been particularly called,—especially when, perhaps, I have entered my room, fastened the door, opened my desk, or bent my knee—expecting a season of sacred solitude, and immediately a little tap comes at the outside, and a voice asks entrance, and calls me to other duties. This derangement of my purpose or disappointment of my heavenly interview, has not been acceptable; but I strive to recollect that, as a servant of the cross, it is my part

to do what the *Master* bids, and not to choose my own work. No doubt it is a privilege thus to be put on *practical* demonstration of obedience and love. And in such things much of that life consists which we call the life of faith. May the Lord bless us with an increasing abundance of His anointing, for it is by this alone that we are exhibiting His image !

You will be glad to hear that we are in the midst of prosperous work for the Lord. I think the great pressure of the times is sanctified to awaken earnestness in seeking the true riches ; and not only amongst the poor, but with many in the other classes, there is a visible excitement, leading to enquiry and some anxious solicitude respecting the impending judgments by which God is preparing the way for the speedy manifestation of himself. I believe that this is the day wherein we are called to be as Noah ; preachers of righteousness, exhibiting the ark, and forewarning of the coming flood. Every thing around us wears the aspect of those times of which prophecy is full, and they to whom the Lord has given grace to see the signs, have a responsibility on this ground, which they must discharge ; a due impression on our hearts will animate them with zeal and charity, so as to make us labour in season and out of season, with affectionate importunity endeavouring to persuade men. Poor unhappy sinners !—how little do they calculate upon the horrible dismay which will seize the unpardoned soul, when the Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven ! how little think, now, whilst they are saying, Peace and safety, what unavailing cries for refuge in the ark will then be uttered ! O my brother, may we press upon them the timely consideration, animated by the hope that amongst these the Lord has His elect ones, who shall be made willing in the day of His power.

This abused and calumniated doctrine of election is a great support to the labourer. With what simplicity we can work, when we know that the word must prosper in that which God sends it to! How this thought frees us from care, whilst it enlivens us also with expectation! Surely where there is no individual blessedness derived from it to our own souls, yet we ought to prize it for the energy it puts into all our relative exertions. But, thanks be to our Lord, it is a spring of sure consolation to us in both respects, and fills us with gladness and stability of heart.

It is also a comfort in reference to those grievous evils which Satan, in the form of an angel of light, would impose upon the church; for we are assured that these shall not prevail against the elect. O may we rejoice in spirit, and be telling of the wonders of love that we possess whilst we thus rest in the arms of the eternal purpose, and find our world, and our heaven, and our safety, and peace in Jesus' breast.

Whenever any uneasy solicitude would creep into my soul, and subjects of apprehension are suggested by those around me, I endeavour to retreat into that dear place of peace; and I believe you will echo the language of my heart, when I say that thus it is possible with appropriating faith to exclaim, "Wonderful art thou, O Lord, in thy holy places." They are chambers of abundance, wherein the covenant has laid up for us more than we can ask or think.

Did I tell you that I have changed my meeting, usually held on Thursday evening, to Thursday at half-past two o'clock? It was a particular requirement from some who were not able to encounter the night air; hitherto it has surprisingly answered. The dear poor people make great efforts to attend, the same as if it were evenings, by rising to their work at four in the

morning, and many delicate people come. * * * But it would fill my paper to mention the names of persons who have lately evinced increase of desire after the Lord. Let it suffice, my brother, that we see the Eternal Spirit operating, and let us glorify Him.

Patience, such as he has shewn both to the labourers and to the people, calls for gratitude unspeakable, and sometimes my heart is almost overwhelmed with this emotion.

I have taken some of the characters of our Lord for Thursday, thinking it might afford fuller opportunity for opening out subjects which would be suitable for the classes assembled. I have finished the Lord's Prayer ; and next Monday evening, begin another set of subjects on the various states of the human heart, intending to shew its depraved nature, and then the various operations belonging to its gracious discipline, when under the Holy Ghost.

All these things I mention to you, my beloved brother, that I may engage your supplications in our behalf, and may suggest to you what may be most needful to ask, when you think of me at the mercy-seat.

I had a letter from your dear son a little while since, and replied to him. I was glad to see a few lines from his hand. My heart earnestly desires his salvation. O my beloved friend and brother, may you have all the blessings you desire in all your dear family, and the Lord's eternal mercy fill your own bosom with more than creatures can impart! Give my true and very affectionate love to Mrs. ——, in whom I trust the heavenly life is increased, deepened and dear.

Farewell. Believe me your very affectionate and faithfully attached sister and friend,

M. S.

CLXVII.

Engrossing Work—Kent's Anthem—Trials in expectation—Despondency and Distrust dishonourable—Uncertainty of Events an incentive to Diligence.

I HAVE very anxiously desired, my beloved friend, an opportunity in which to utter some of that fulness which I have in my heart, but I desired it in vain, excepting only as the Mercy-seat is approached, and I breathed out for you an earnest prayer, that I believe is abundantly answered. It is your loving entreaty that I should send you my little parcel, and I seek to do it, although, as you will anticipate, I am very busy at this season. It may seem strange to some that my work should be of so engrossing a nature; but *you* will understand that as it is very much directed to the *young*, the claims are unceasing and increasing, and introduce also many relative concerns wherein time is demanded. Blessed be the Lord, you and I, dear loved friend, agree in considering all that comes in the Lord's service sweet and precious!

My spirit is just now kept in a very perpetual realization of the desirableness of reaching the Rock in His glory, for we are practising Kent's anthem, "Hear my prayer,"—you will remember the expressive passage, "O that I had wings." I do not indeed admire the emotion of the tried Psalmist, who, when he uttered the desire would have escaped to the *wilderness*; but words such as these truly express the longings of a heart that would be at rest in the Paradise above; and whilst we are singing in concert together, I cannot but experience those flutterings of the heart which seem to answer to the wings of the dove, escaping from stormy wind and tempest. Yet we do not desire *heavenly* repose, so

long as earthly work is ordained for us; and in the service of the Lord we shall always find a proportion of rest and joy, which is enough, although it be attended also with a proportion of what must ever belong to present things.

It appears we are to stand prepared for further exercises of a trying nature, the clouds gathering above the interests of the church; but we see the bow, and are unmoved. It does not seem improbable that we of the establishment may be called to very practical demonstrations of our integrity; but we need not disturb ourselves on these points; sufficient strength is prepared for us, and we have only to draw it forth as the time and day may need—given, it will be, for our Lord is faithful.

It is surely much to His dishonour when we yield to anything like despondency, or utter any words of distrust. The Lord keep us from these evils, and shed forth that cheerful affiance in Him which can make our hearts dance within us; or if not so, can and will make that heart stedfast in composed trust. I look around, and see nothing on which the eye can fix for a *rest*, but only on the covenant of endless love and life. And O, with what brilliance does it appear by *reason* of the darkness wherein it shines! This is a consideration tending to beget great satisfaction in trouble,—is it not, dear friend? shall we not be glad when by any of our tribulations such a result is secured? Let then the trial come; only let Jesus smile therein, and all will be well!

The uncertainty attendant upon present things has also another beneficial effect; it makes us more diligent to work while it is day, and to use the present opportunity. Opportunity is richly afforded *to us* at present; there is an earnest hungering among our own

dear ones, and I trust that yet much is to be done,—but this is all. Other things we will leave with the Living Head; knowing this, that to His members He will always give all good things.

How cheering are your accounts, my beloved friend, of all your concerns! The Lord Jesus be praised! He shews us great troubles, and then He turneth and bringeth us forth, and comforteth us on every side. Has it not been so with you, and will you not let me join in your song of exultation and praise? O it becometh well the just to be thankful, and an united tribute is very acceptable on High.

M. S.

CLXVIII.

Probable Consequences of a Visit to France—Temporary Abode—Infant Interests—Flock and its Dangers.

MY BELOVED —,

It is my earnest prayer that we may not have to lament any depression of our sacred delights, for in them we possess more than this world can give; and by manifesting this life we glorify him from whom it proceeds. It is under these impressions that I view the proposed visit to France. I know, my dearest —, that in every situation the Lord's child is the Lord's *temple*, so that we carry him about with us at all times; but by that very consideration we are taught the importance of keeping far from scenes where his Holy Spirit might be grieved; and, unless his own directions were to put us into the place of temptation, it is at our peril we ven-

ture there. In respect of France I know that in some cases it is considered desirable for a failing body—I know also that there are favoured spots in that country where the pure light shineth; but usually it is found to be the source of much evil to an English traveller; when, moved by love of change, or novelty, or vanity, they quit our shores to sojourn there. I have seen affecting examples of this, especially in a certain chilling of the devotional life, which can never be compensated by any milder breeze on this failing tabernacle; which after all must drop, and its immortal inhabitant enter a region into which we may well desire to pass in full possession of all the fervency of holy love! I dread the atmosphere of the world under any circumstances; but in *that* land of infidelity, and superstition, and vanity, it is yet more to be feared. You will at once gather my counsel, my dear girl, from what I have written, and unless it is advised by medical men, or appointed by an unquestionable providence, I hope you will not venture. Our dear —— is included, of course, in this word, and will along with your dear self hearken to a faithful friend. Could we have had you here once more either in the pasture or near it, my spirit would have rejoiced; and still I do not wholly relinquish the hope that it may please the Lord to appoint it thus in the end. If it will be good he will do it: but here I commit the matter to him because he may have very merciful purposes in appointing otherwise; and it is our happiness and security to be led by Him. May our every step be so governed and directed.

Your description of the ladies with whom you have had some idea of lodging is very favourable—your prudence too, in seeking confirmation from those who have been under the roof, for it is very different to know persons by occasional intercourse, and by daily associa-

tion. I hesitate as to the expediency of entering the house with an expectation that *if* found agreeable you would *abide* there; this might occasion an awkward sort of parting should it be otherwise. Could you not rather propose to be received for a given time, and have your arrangements made at any rate, whether it proved a suitable home or otherwise, to leave it for a while—say a few months; you would in this way feel more at liberty and so would they. I shall affectionately wait your answer with some solicitude too; for whilst I entirely and confidently commit you to the orphan's faithful parent and almighty helper, rejoicing to know likewise that He is yours in a *covenant* relation, these little circumstances of an abode on earth have many important accompaniments belonging to them, in which we may suitably express an affectionate care.

I have seen the dear little babe, for whom your hearts will tenderly yearn. It is a very interesting little creature, and it must needs be so to us all, who, when looking upon the helpless little form, realize its immortality, and contemplate its growing experience of what belongs to the wilderness; and much as natural affection rejoices in giving a welcome to the little stranger, we cannot forget how they are “born to trouble,” and that they are also inheritors of an eternal world, of bliss or of woe. The Lord look on this child, and fold it in his arms as his lamb!—say amen to this prayer, my beloved girls, from the ground of your hearts.

As it respects the state of our flock, you may, I trust, take comfort; the Lord doth not leave us without a continued witness that he works with us. Our present circumstances intimate a rather different direction of our labour than that we have hitherto had, at least as to *degree*; for thanks be to the Lord he has enabled

us to stand against heresy ; but we are liable to more open opposition from the papists than as yet K—— has seen, and we are called to put on our armour. Alas ! the compromising spirit of the half-persuaded professor—the sleepy condition even of the Bride—and the private calculations made for party—are bitter colleagues with superstition and infidelity, and will bring upon the church the north wind, the sifting-time, the judgment that must begin at the house of God. We do not fear the result ; Jesus must triumph ; but we know that *to us* the call is loud to be on our watch-tower, and to seek the broad seal on the *forehead*; for this is the sealing day, before the winds are let loose. God bless you, my beloved, and the Lord establish you in his faith and beautify you in Himself and for Himself ! Farewell, it is very late, and I retire to my pillow. May the Divine Presence be now on yours, believe me your true, affectionate, and faithful friend and mother in dearest bonds,

M. S.

CLXIX.

Affectionate Concern—Demonstrated Love.

I DO, my beloved friend, most sincerely sympathise with you in the debility which I hear does at present rest upon your body. I know you will welcome all that the dear hand of Jesus puts upon you, yet I also experimentally know that when we would be ever rising to the responsibilities which are around us, it is painful to feel a weight of encumbering clay which, in addition to its common infirmity, has that of langour and indisposi-

tion. At this moment, perhaps I speak with a stronger degree of feeling on this subject, as being now conscious of weakness, and sometimes very much overpowered by passing pains and sickness that constrain me to lie down when I desire to be up and at work. All this, however, belongs to ripening influences of the Lord's furnace, and is undoubtedly intended to produce within us an entire conformity of our will to that of the Lord ; for even in works that are for His name, our undertaking and our *measure* of work and our *time* of work must all be *as* He directs. This is a reflection that quiets the mind, and makes us ready to relinquish even the things most sacredly delightful to our souls, if he bids us so to do.

His kingdom, my beloved friend, must and shall prosper, for He is the Author and Finisher of all its parts, and although we are privileged to be used in the service from time to time, we must not imagine that our cessation from work will impede the advance of His eternal purpose. Blessed be His name that in Him the everlasting counsels of the covenant will stand, and Jehovah be magnified in the glory of all His redeemed. My own soul is increasingly established in this cheering confidence, whilst looking through the clouds of the day and believing the sure approach of the burst of light and glory that ere long shall leave no gloomy cloud upon the promise. Already then, my friend, let us be prompt to hear the word of assuring grace, and to receive it in its simplicity and faithfulness. The promise, and the Lord of the promise, are ours—what then can we want ? How great is our privilege whilst feeling how unfeignedly we can say that we have no want but what Jesus can amply satisfy by the communication of himself ; for verily He is our all in all. These possessions, my dear friend, prove to us how bountifully the Lord has en-

riched the once destitute and poverty-stricken soul; nor should we omit to observe the grace, that its Author may receive the just tribute to His name. Assuredly we had never experienced these yearnings of heart after the fulness of delight in God himself, had he not powerfully demonstrated His love, by His *work* of love. We are then encompassed by everlasting arms, and in these arms we can joyfully either live or die. * * *

Farewell, my ever-loved friend. The Lord Jesus give you such sweet tokens of His peace. Let us meet in the Spirit.

I am ever yours in the faithful affection we have from
and in Christ.

M. S.

CLXX.

Labour of Love—Increasing Numbers—Content with Judgment of the Lord alone—Novelties—State of the Soul after Death.

* * * * * What a vastly interesting course that is, my friend, which is directed by the Spirit for those who are bid to seek up the wanderers or to give food to the recovered; and how various are the dear engagements which branch out from such a course. You know it experimentally, and can fully enter into such an observation. I trust we are each called to the labour of love by Him whose delight it is to shower down blessings. . . . So far as *our* eye can penetrate, there is prosperity still extended here. We have persons added each week *professedly* to meetings and means of grace; and since faith comes by hearing we may hope that whilst under the sound of

the gospel a saving visitation may come; but let us beware of falling, as David did, into the snare of *numbering* the people. Our part is to work and to depend. We know not which shall prosper, this or that, but the Lord will save His people and glorify himself, and that is enough for us. This recollection preserves us from many evils and leads us into the exercise of simplicity; and I find it, my beloved friend, one of the best means towards *contentment* and *impartiality* in the work, that in all instances we may drink into the Spirit of our Lord, and say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." * * * * *

I enter into the remarkable *providence* (as we will esteem it) of which you speak, respecting the interview — had with —. It is well so far as we ought to rejoice, when, having committed our cause to the Lord, He is pleased to make our integrity to appear. Blessed be His name we are willing, however, to *wait* for this until the eternal day, and even then it is interesting and important only so far as the cause of Christ may be concerned in it. It is a very small matter to be judged by man, whose estimate of things is frequently so mistaken, and often so fluctuating; and it is happy for us to dismiss all concern about it so long as we walk beneath Jesus' smile. This is a lesson which perhaps, as believers, we are slow to learn, for we are greatly and properly solicitous to glorify the name we profess, and to *appear* what we *are*. But since it does not always accord with the divine rule respecting us individually, that we should possess this power, we have to remember to glorify him before angels, by shewing that we are content with the honour that comes from God *only*, and that we can leave even our character for integrity with him. Until this mind is produced, how tossed and buffeted we are by troubled thoughts and anxious affec-

CLXXII.

The Lord near.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

* * * * * AND now, beloved friend, I would express my joy for your safe passage, and for all the mercies that awaited you at home, which I beseech the Lord to continue, and above all for that holy frame of mind in which you have been enabled to meet what the Lord has appointed in simplicity and faith. How unutterably precious are the divine influences under which we are permitted *momentarily* to live, and O how intimately may we realize our fellowship with Him who gives out the *momentary* supply of the Spirit, if only we will believe the divine engagements, "*I am with you.*" Ah, my beloved friend, how seldom is the *sweetness* of this promise drawn out by even his own dear people. How little is the *nearness* of the embracing Lord felt and known even by such as profess to be in his arms! Were we more conscious of our privilege, our peace would be more uninterrupted, and our restlessness and fears would give place to the prevailing *confidence* of love. We need increase of energy in this particular, and especially in these times have to seek it as a most blessed means of stability in storms. Reasonings, and calculations, and light, do not avail to quiet the tumultuous nature we have about us; but *one* powerful sight of Him who is more than all, and who in all His greatness is *our God and Brother*, gives resting and repose even when winds are howling all around. You and I have found it so, therefore we speak experimentally, and should charge it upon

the gospel a saving visitation may come; but let us beware of falling, as David did, into the snare of *numbering* the people. Our part is to work and to depend. We know not which shall prosper, this or that, but the Lord will save His people and glorify himself, and that is enough for us. This recollection preserves us from many evils and leads us into the exercise of simplicity; and I find it, my beloved friend, one of the best means towards *contentment* and *impartiality* in the work, that in all instances we may drink into the Spirit of our Lord, and say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." * * * * *

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tions ; but through this victory our rising distress sinks into calm and is hushed at the feet of Jesus. * *

When, my dear friend, will the novelties of the human mind be at an end in respect of religious concerns ! *Novelties* I should not call them ; most of the heretical opinions broached in our day have existed before and have died the death they merited ; but now they are revived and imposed upon men as new and wonderful discoveries. Surely, if we credit the Scriptures, we cannot allow that the souls of the departed are either unconscious or *out of* such an abode as determines their lot. They, underneath the altar spoken of Rev. vi. 9, 10, were decidedly conscious and exalted on high. The dying thief passed into glory, for he was *with Christ* ; Stephen commended his spirit into immediate joy ; Paul apprehended and longed for the same immediate bliss. It is declared that, when *absent* from the body we are *present* with the Lord. The parable of Dives also conveys this instruction and cannot be *contrary* to truth. Many other arguments might be adduced. The final judgment will give the open glory to Christ which belongs essentially to His rule, and will exhibit His triumph over death ; but I think, my beloved friend, the simple words of the Scripture will suffice to a simple mind ; and far be it from us to admit what so detrimentally aims at our dearest privilege ; which is to go *home* to the *presence* we love as soon as we quit the course He has appointed us to run ! Were it *otherwise*, then surely it is not *better to depart*—far better to *remain*, than to exchange our present engagement and work for Christ for a condition of unconscious stupefaction or useless wanderings. God bless you, my ever dear friend.

Believe me, in truest bonds, your faithfully affectionate friend,

M. S.

CLXXI.

Surrender of those we Love.

I TRULY sympathize in your present sorrow with your dear sister. Precious soul ! you need not wish to stop her flight,—*Nature* mourns, for bereavements are bitter to us who have loving hearts ; but when we look beyond the veil—when we contemplate the enraptured Host above—and when we feel that to be *near* only by *faith*, can give such holy and substantial joy as we have felt, surely we can ask no higher boon, and desire no richer grace, than that such as we love may be numbered with the company thus blest in bliss, and freed from evil ! Give her up, my beloved friend ; loose the cords that would hold her down, and bid her speed on her heaven-directed flight with eagle's wing. Soon she will reach the topmost hill of the Zion above, and gaze on the sun.

Truly I sympathize ! I have been watching by my sister's bed of pain the last ten days * * * * but now she is relieved of so much pain, and seems to be lent to us a little while longer. * * * * The Lord be with you, dear love, in the furnace ; but it shall consume our dross ; and when he has tried us, we shall come forth as gold. I have not time to enter upon any other subject. I hasten to despatch this, and may the Lord carry it from my warm heart, which dearly loves you, into yours, and make us a comfort and blessing to one another.

I am yours in dearest bonds,
M. S.

CLXXII.

The Lord near.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

* * * * * AND now, beloved friend, I would express my joy for your safe passage, and for all the mercies that awaited you at home, which I beseech the Lord to continue, and above all for that holy frame of mind in which you have been enabled to meet what the Lord has appointed in simplicity and faith. How unutterably precious are the divine influences under which we are permitted *momentarily* to live, and O how intimately may we realize our fellowship with Him who gives out the *momentary* supply of the Spirit, if only we will believe the divine engagements, "*I am with you.*" Ah, my beloved friend, how seldom is the *sweetness* of this promise drawn out by even his own dear people. How little is the *nearness* of the embracing Lord felt and known even by such as profess to be in his arms! Were we more conscious of our privilege, our peace would be more uninterrupted, and our restlessness and fears would give place to the prevailing *confidence* of love. We need increase of energy in this particular, and especially in these times have to seek it as a most blessed means of stability in storms. Reasonings, and calculations, and light, do not avail to quiet the tumultuous nature we have about us; but *one* powerful sight of Him who is more than all, and who in all His greatness is *our God and Brother*, gives resting and repose even when winds are howling all around. You and I have found it so, therefore we speak experimentally, and should charge it upon

our hearts never to forget the presence in which we live (Ps. xxxix. 19—20.) Do not be anxious about *domestic* trial, beloved friend; Jesus will rule for you, and the hearts and affections of men are all *Jesus' subjects*; He turns them like rivers in the south; and although it be sometimes not exactly in that channel which our wisdom would cut, we always find it is by that which in the issue causes the every winding thereof to render the child of promise more fruitful and luxuriant in the life of faith. After all, this is the subject on which we are most interested, and wherein the Lord is magnified; and if *painful* results as to *nature* are allowed, do we not know that the Lord is as much in the pain as in the joy. * * * * *

The Lord reigneth and will reign. O precious joyful fact, and *in and for* us too. Away then with doubt or care or fear. With such a Shield and such a Captain of Salvation, what have we to fear? Farewell, my dear one. The eternal blessing be on you, and Jesus in all his peace abundantly yours.

I am ever your tenderly affectionate friend in the dearest bonds,

M. S.

CLXXIII.

Appropriating Faith under Trial.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

WITH deepest sympathy of heart I enter upon your affecting circumstances, as I am sure you will believe. I had heard of the declining state of your dear sister, but was not aware that she was so far reduced in

strength until your dear letter arrived. May our own Shepherd and Lord make you to feel His presence with a proportion of holy resignation, which shall meet the proportion of trial that now attends you. We know His faithfulness, and we can trust Him. Already you speak of the appropriating acts of faith as abundantly in exercise,—is not this a clear token of what the Lord will do? Trials such as these, my friend, do touch us in our tenderest part; yet usually, I believe, *they* are best calculated to promote that object we, along with our God, have nearest our desires; and O, I trust we shall increasingly joy in Him as our All in all.

For your beloved sister all is well. Who would wish her stay in such a world *amidst* such *times* of peculiar tribulation, and *from* such a scene of unutterable blessedness as that which awaits her on high! We are in the habit of *praying* that our Lord will hasten his kingdom, shortly accomplish the number of his elect, and bring in His glory,—are not these answers to our cry? and shall we not accept them as such, and glorify him in the fires. * * * * God bless you, my beloved friend, and ever cheer you, and be your closely-associated and bosom friend.

Ever believe me yours in the precious love of Jesus,
M. S.

CLXXIV.

Departure of a Saint—Triumphs of Faith—Infidelity of the natural Man—Subjects to be addressed to such.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

* * * * * I AM thankful to hear of the release of that dear —. She was evidently

fast declining,—her rest is blessed; and really whenever I hear of one called away to the bosom of Jesus on high, my heart beats with a grateful sensation, and its language seems to be—“*Another favoured blood-bought one, hid from the storm, sheltered in bliss!*” O thanks be to Him who is ever in His garden gathering lilies, and whose dwelling above is so continually increased in loveliness and fragrance, by the introduction of so many who are transplanted out of the garden in the desert, into the Eden that knows no rough wind! Did we more powerfully realize *where* these are—*what* they are doing—*whom* they see, and what they *experience*, we should feel our own hearts gladdened by the thought, and bounding over the apparently dark little passage which lies between, we should lose the recollection of what is *gloomy* in such departures.

A few weeks since I had a blessed testimony of the truth of these reflections in a dear young disciple, who breathed out her soul in my arms. The struggle was short, and preceded by a triumphant exultation in her Lord, of the most affecting kind; and when the faith which empowered her in the strength of her Lord thus to triumph, was seen also in her distressed sisters; enabling them to drop her, as it were, from the arms that would have detained her, and to give her up to heaven—I could not but feel a renewed seal, as it were, fresh upon my heart’s persuasion, that our dear Lord adapts his strength to the case whereto he gives it, and is glorified before angels and men by these works of His grace and power. May we, my precious friend, be privileged in like manner to glorify the Lord, both as it may be our lot to pass through scenes of bereavement, and when we pass the final and the perhaps quickly coming conflict. We have no need to be careful, however, even in these matters, if we are living in

the habitual fellowship of our soul with Christ, for we know that He will wisely adapt and proportion *our* strength for our day, even as He has done to others.

I have great sympathy with you, my beloved friend, on the important question which respects one so dear. Alas! our nature is infidel, and this infidelity develops itself in all its many and horrible forms. Perhaps under the circumstances to which your letter refers, it would be prudent for awhile to desist from works *expressly* upon *evidence*. Perhaps the constant use of such weapons only provokes the enmity;—and after all, as it is only by conviction in the *heart* that the evil is removed, subjects *less* addressed to *intellect* and more to the *affections*, might be more suitable; but herein we feel our weakness,—O may we remember Christ's power, and be satisfied also with His sovereignty and will. Why should we strive with Him? Let him do what seemeth Him good,—He will bring home His remnant. O cheering, settling thought!

The Lord bless you, my love, and draw your own soul close to His breast in conscious peace.

Ever your truly affectionate friend,

M. S.

CLXXV.

Time and Method of the Lord—His Sovereignty—Live by Faith.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

* * * * * THIS is a list of what the world calls evils, but which we, my friend, are taught to number amongst the good; for in whatever way we may be refined and meetened for the proper

rest to which we are ordained, that surely is good. Our interviews with the Beloved of our souls are, by afflictions, rendered more invigorating ; and such sweets are an ample recompense for the suffering through which they are attained. I wish our poor — knew more of this than she seems as yet to have experienced ; but the Lord has his own period, as well as his own method of bringing the soul into the simplicity of faith ; and with some dispositions it seems to be not so soon possessed as with others. There may be much to do in her soul with which we are not acquainted ; and the Lord may be operating secretly in a direction that we do not perceive. * * * * We can wait patiently for her, being assured that ere long He who has loved her with everlasting love will moderate the feeling to the creature, and awaken her soul to its unfailing Lord ; and may our dearest Lord teach us all wisdom through these channels. Lessons of unspeakable worth may be conveyed to us all, and we may individually realize the privilege of being like Him of whom it is written, “He did not commit himself to any man, for He knew what was in man ;” and who nevertheless “even when we were enemies, died for us.” O matchless, marvellous charity !

How much, my beloved friend, I sympathize with you in domestic interests, I need not tell you. There can be no greater trial, perhaps, than that to which you are exposed ; yet in your dear bosom the affliction may be a holy messenger. We need to be *quieted* in our hearts, and no means is more powerful to this end than the experience of the vanity of human helps and the *sovereignty* of God in all His ways. This helps us to hush our wishes with meek resignation ; and we are reminded too that ties of nature, however near and tender, endure but for this transitory scene, and that

the world of rest and peace will free us from all anguish, and shew us that all is right that is *done* by the will of our God; and that *He* is right in all that He *permits*. Earnestly, my dearest friend, let us wrestle for this sweet influence to pervade within. Our trials are so many, that unless we live by faith and not by sight, we shall be kept perpetually on the billows, tossed to and fro without a calm; but with Jesus in the trouble we are at rest. O may the eternal witness of Jesus, the Comforter, speak to us in power, and give forth that peculiar joy in the Holy Ghost which belongs to Messiah's kingdom. * * * * *

Farewell, my ever loved friend, my heart asks long comfort for you. Believe me ever yours in Jesus' bonds,

M. S.

CLXXVI.

Experience in Affliction—Christian Consistency—Gospel Standard—Sympathy.

MY BELOVED ——,

YOUR welcome and interesting letter demanded an immediate reply, and my heart prompted compliance with the demand. I fear I cannot enter fully, at this time, upon the subject so important to Christian experience, on which your pen has so sweetly entered. * *

From this region of apparent affliction many dear visits to heaven are granted me; and when positive suffering decreases, my spirit is enabled to go out of the scene of trial, to the world of uninterrupted peace. The everlasting gates have indeed not unfrequently been opened to me on such occasions; and we ought to bear

witness to the divine faithfulness, when such mercy is applied to the hour of need.

The promise is given which assures us of impartations of comfort for the hour of sorrow; and the promise from such a Lord should be enough for our steady expectation to be stayed upon. Yet it is enlivening to hear from the voice of a fellow-pilgrim, as it echoes through the vale of tribulation, the testimony "the Lord is here!" Ever, my dearest —, may we be found deepening the full tone of praise, which should thus be unceasingly heard from *tried* and *supported* believers. How graciously the Lord gives out the measure of his manifestations, just as most suited to the occasion; and how very wonderful are the accompaniments which make us able, whilst indulged with a glimpse of the reserved inheritance, to look still on the *present* scene with satisfaction! Indeed I can say it is so with me, for the heaven above, which, in the blood and righteousness of Jesus, is mine, as a portion ere long to be enjoyed, does not so engross my desire as to make me forget that to *live* is Christ. We know indeed that the work of the Lord shall be carried on, and his people shall be fed; but as long as he is pleased to multiply the bread he breaks, through our means, it is a privilege to be with the multitude in the wilderness. Such are the thoughts which keep me in a waiting attitude, being content to abide the Lord's time and way of shewing what may be His will concerning me. It is perhaps in circumstances such as these that we feel the desirableness of living in habitual fellowship with God, during the day of comparative health, in an extent which we are not able so fully to comprehend at other seasons. Indeed the fact is, that there is no true Christian consistency to be obtained, either in living or dying, in any other way. When allowing ourselves to

form some standard or mode of judging and acting different from, or not reaching unto that which the Gospel exhibits, we of course wander away from that which our *Lord* deems acceptable; and in proportion we fail of glorifying Him. And what is the simple standard exhibited by the Gospel? Is it not comprised in the *law of love*?—a love which, delighting in the object loved, will constrain to the life of self-denial and obedience!

We read and talk of having the world crucified to us, of having our conversation in heaven, of being crucified with Christ; but we do not *realize* the nature of these great privileges, unless the fervor of a devoted heart be ours; let that be our possession, and then the divine requirement enters with sweet persuasiveness, which renders compliance our dear delight. Ah, my dear —, how important is it therefore that we look to this principle, and that we cherish it by intimate communion in the Spirit, and by a jealous walk which *looks well* that no root of bitterness spring up unperceived, and that no “little foxes spoil the vine.”

It is a lovely thing when consistency flows, as it were, a stream naturally issuing out of a holy spring within; it is then that the freshness of the heavenly life is seen, and its sweetness is commended. And surely we know that, in such cases, we love the *control* of the Holy Ghost, and wear the divine requirements as a *loved* ornament and delight—so that individual enjoyment and relative influence ensue! May our own dear Lord give us more of this simplicity! Vile is our propensity in the *flesh* to walk in an uneven path, and deceitful indeed is the heart within us, which too often proposes peace when there is no peace. The Lord make us upright, and cleanse this defiled mind and

judgment ! Surely the words are plainly spoken—"Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

I have been obliged, my dear girl, to break off, and my letter has remained half written for three days. I have been very ill during that period ; and although to-day I am a little revived, I continue unable to make any exertion. I have received a message from Mrs. ——, which awakens my sympathy for dear ——, with renewed feeling. The Lord bless and support her ! I do not know if this be any fresh intelligence from ——, or only a late report, of what your own letter had communicated before. But be this as it may, my affectionate sympathy is expressed before our Lord, beseeching Him to enter her mind and heart with His own power, and there to effect the blessing most required. He sees the necessity, and has the effectual blessing ready for every time and condition. I trust He will give her out of His fulness, and lift up her soul to enlarged views of the believer's existence. Then she will need no other consolation amidst her sufferings. Give her my true love ; tell her now is the time to realize the supernatural life, and that I trust we shall meet ere long ! Ah, it may be very soon—in the world of light and peace ! Remember me, my dear love, to all whom I love dearly in our Lord—you know them without my specifying by name. May the divine Presence be with you all. God bless you, my ever dear —— ; you know that I bear you in my heart, and if we live I look to see your face again with joy.

I am ever your tenderly affectionate friend, in dearest bonds,

M. S.

CLXXVII.

Divine Rule—Covenant Messengers—Prudential judging—Reflections on the Families of Jacob and David—Affectionate Sympathy.

WE learn by experience, my beloved brother, how little we can control events, or decide upon what shall be to-morrow. It was my intention to have written last Wednesday, instead of which I was in a dark room confined to my bed, where with very little interruption I have remained ever since. Being this evening rather relieved, I open my desk in order to begin what perhaps I may finish before to-morrow's post. Every part of our dear Lord's dispensations to his children is, however, welcome to the heart that loves him; and although there are some moments in which loving acquiescence is mingled with sighs of conscious pain and grief, the triumph of faith is secure, and Jesus still lives the ruling Lord of the region within, whether it rest in a smooth unruffled calm, or rise into swelling billows and waves.

Unfeignedly, my beloved friend, do I sympathize with you in every one of those afflictions by which you are ever made sensible of passing through a *desert*. Truly on you, my brother, many fierce storms have been allowed to beat, and many a north wind has been sent. I say *sent*, because we know that sorrows are covenant messengers from the Lord to the redeemed, and that they are amongst the various things by which He is pursuing His own purpose of sanctification in us. There never was a blast we did not need, and never was one that did not carry away with it some of the chaff, leaving the wheat in a cleaner condition, and more meet for the garner.

In respect of ——, whose case is most pressing on the mind, there is much to awaken regret and sorrow. The step he has taken cannot commend itself to us, my brother, who judge by a christian standard ; and viewing it in this light, it gives occasion to a feeling that is very painful. But contemplating him as acting upon natural principles and feelings, we ought not perhaps to be surprised ; and in respect of this world may surmise that possibly he may have put himself forward in the service he has entered, and so provide for himself in the way most congenial with his present taste. It seems one of those cases in which the most prudent measure is to leave the mind to its own resolves, trusting that experience will throw it into more sober conclusions. As to the spiritual interests of the soul, we can only look to covenant love, and we may take the comfort of knowing that this will find no situation too difficult for its actings.

As to my opinion in reference to the family of David and Jacob, which you ask me to think upon again, I can have no hesitation. It is true that in Eli's case alone, of these three, *express mention* is made of the offence which in this instance produced immediate judgment from the Lord. But our own common observation upon the history of the two others, who notwithstanding their faith and devotion manifestly erred in *household regulation*, will convince us that the family of each were not sufficiently under habitual discipline and restraint. Jacob was impolitic in his *partiality*—so was David. *Idols* were in Jacob's family unrepressed, until the Lord roused him to attention. The crimes of his children were evidently not enough reprobated. Dinah was left to associate with the daughters of the land. And as to David, he evinced *continued weakness* on these points; these evils manifestly em-

boldening his children in various instances of sin, and of rebellion against parental authority and love. We of course consider such things *as evils*;—we know that the Lord will not suffer sin upon his people—that he usually visits us correspondently with our offences, and that the effect following this cause may justly be considered correction from the Lord.

Is it not thus, my dear brother, that we judge in all our own matters? Do we not, when meeting an affliction, immediately ask, Is there not a cause? And do we not speedily discover that the affliction has a particular voice speaking to some particular point of experience belonging to our path?

In respect of the evils in question, I am quite persuaded that they form a very principal part of *christian negligence*; for in innumerable instances I have seen and heard of eminently *christian* parents occupied in the duties which respected *other* families, whilst their *own* have not been conducted with consistency; and of persons so circumstanced even taking offence at those who might intimate to them that their own children, when out of their sight, were guilty of anything wrong. This no doubt proceeds from much fondness for what is *our own*, and as it is natural to us all, it is well to be put upon our guard.

How it grieves me, my brother, to read that little sentence in yours which respects your own health and that of my dear Mrs. ——. Your sufferings of mind, I fear, press upon the earthly tabernacle,—O may the Comforter give faith, support and hold you up! We have certain claims which render life valuable, and it is a blessing to be able to meet them with vigour suitable to their importance. But He who is our all will give us out of His fulness what will be best for wilderness days, and *home* will make amends for every journeying

day of trial. Surely to us, my brother, the prospect must ever be cheering ; and it is well that we can rise above this thick and oppressive atmosphere, and from the heights of the mountain of salvation look into bright and cloudless regions, where the full glory of our sun will for ever prevent the darkening power of *present* things. Soon will the time of exercise be closed ; and when it is so, as sent by our souls' beloved, we will rejoice to leave all our interests for Him to care for and to keep. * * * * I must now say farewell. Receive from my heart a full expression of truest affection, and give to my dear Mrs. —— my tender remembrance, &c.

M. S.

CLXXVIII.

Treasured Pledges—Nourishment of the Word—Feelings tempered—The only sure Rest—Returning Spring—Signs of the Times—The Spirit's Tokens.

THE first feeling which I am disposed to express in reply to your last, my beloved friend, is that of unfeigned gratitude to our gracious God, for his protecting care of your valuable life. Wonderful indeed are His blessed ways ! And in nothing is He to be more admired and loved than in bringing us continually into the very extremity of peril, that he may then take occasion to display his ever-present power and love. How often is this the case, both in temporal and eternal interests ; and how truly may we say that Abraham's experience is ours, " In the mount it shall be seen ! "

I bless Him for having demonstrated this unfailing grace to you, my brother, and will unite with you in

raising an Ebenezer to His praise. But thanks be to His name, we have still more than this to do. We have to treasure up these memorials and *pledges* of future help, for He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!

Thus, my dear friend, we are learning what it is to interpret the testimony in the word, by the experience which the heavenly Teacher gives us. And in this way the word *delightfully* dwells in us, and proves that its proper quality is to be nutritive to our best life.

You will never forget those sweet influences which warmed your heart amidst the winter blast. It was a season to you like that recorded of Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. And truly you may say that the hosts of the Lord were with you. But looking through angelic guards, we realize the Lord of all; and since we dwell in *His presence* this is a sure and overshadowing defence for every evil.

Much need have we, my friend, of these consolations, which our Lord has thus provided for us; and so long as we remain in this scene of trial, I trust we shall powerfully realize our heritage.

We are every day becoming more sensible of poverty and uncertainty in the things which are of *self*, or which are human; therefore it is indeed most blessed to be heir of a possession which is imperishable. I fully enter into your experience, as you well know, my brother, in respect of those longings after the Lord's presence above, where every power of the soul will be gratified and perfected. No consideration could temper the feeling, but that which arises from preference of the divine will, and the hope that something more remains for us to do for Him who has done so much for us! We have, however, the privilege of saying with the Apostle, "I therefore so run, not as *uncertainly*." The race

may be long, and exhaustion may sometimes be felt; but we have the full persuasion of a blissful result, and keep the prize in view.

How lamentable it is that many of our fellow-pilgrims deprive themselves of that exhilarating attendant upon the conflict which is to be derived from the *assurance* of success. I know no part of the covenant distinction more exciting than this. And when I feel its power in my own soul, I grieve that any true believer should be without it—more especially in this period of contention and gathering storm, when the Christian's only sure rest is so evidently in Christ alone. However, we may conclude that the Lord has given to us this measure of faith by an act of abounding love; and the comparison which we may make, in this respect, with the state of others, shall redound to the glory of Him who has mercy on whom He will have mercy!

The last month has been one of sickness in our household; we have all been ill in body, but joyful in spirit. Thus our dear Lord continues to prove the graces which His own Spirit creates, and places us in situations where we may have opportunity to magnify Him. Perhaps the stormy season is trying to us all, but now the air is milder, and we begin to hail the re-appearance of some spots of green, and in our garden the ground is bursting here and there, and its hidden treasures are making an effort to appear, so that in a little time we may look for the gayer dress of spring.

The variety is good in every sense; and it is a blessed truth that we can derive blessing from all kinds of dispensations, natural or gracious.

I have just been interrupted by a call from M——H——, and I told her how kindly you remembered the situation in which they are. Truly I do not know any that is more distressing, or wherein there has been

greater exercise of simple faith—they have encountered one afflictive dispensation after another in rapid succession and with *increasing* dependance of spirit upon the Lord ; and I often contemplate them with their four little children with admiration of God's wonderful ministration of grace according to need.

The present scenes around us all, my friend, are very affecting. The universal distress of the poor is what exceeds the usual lot ; but the Lord opens the hearts of many even beyond their power, to contribute to their relief. . . . It would be gratifying to you to see the disposition of meekness with which the dear believing poor suffer their trials, with sweet looks of serenity and expression, which denote that they are looking for their Lord's return, when all will be well !

This influence I consider as *one* of the signs of the last times. It seems to be consequent upon the Holy Spirit's operation, as the witness to those great events which are coming ; and perhaps we do not enough notice *these* signs ? Our eyes are so much attracted by the more conspicuous features of infidelity, &c., that we do not give a just proportion of attention to the tokens which we are to expect will appear in the hidden church. So many are engaged in shewing the *dark* signs of the times, I wish some one would publish the *bright* signs, and try to lift up the hands that hang down, and to invigorate the almost fainting minds of some who are watching the course of events. Certainly the joy of the Lord is our strength. What we have to do is to bear the *daily* cross and to sing in the ways of the Lord. I hope that our own little flock advances in these salutary views !

The little juvenile society is very prosperous ; Maria has united with it a plan for the distribution of tracts ; the children of the school, who distribute them, are

bound to read them to their parents—always on a Saturday, and in preparation for the Sabbath, &c.

All here unite in truest affection to you and yours. Believe me always, in the faithful love of Jesus, &c.

M. S.

CLXXIX.

Solidity and Fervour combined—Conversion of Jews—Sick Room.

My heart does most truly respond to what you say, my beloved friend. And sure I am that in this weary world we need whatever may be instrumental to lift us above the contemplation of human misery, and to fasten the eye on the invisible kingdom. It is through the means of sanctified fellowship, the new man is invigorated and can take higher flights to the region of bliss; so precious are those enjoyments that we will say, Surely my soul would be ever on the wing!

What a privilege it is, my brother, to experience along with a growth in solidity of affections, the proportion of fervor to keep pace. I have frequently seen what I have considered a contrary result, which has occasioned much reflection, and suggested the necessity of exercising vigilance, lest whilst all the *intellectual* faculties are making advances, the *first love* should in any degree be forgotten.

May we, my beloved friend, ever be preserved from this evil, and remember how responsible we are to cherish this fire in its blessed intenseness of devotion!

Our Lord has anointed us with the heavenly baptism; we know whom we have believed; we have lived in that

blessed place of shelter, and we will endeavour to demonstrate, how much is cherished there the sacred heat within us. * * * *

What an interesting statement you have given me of the Jew. I do not wonder at the strong excitement you would feel, more particularly as he seems to have presented so much of simplicity—a blessing which probably has been greatly promoted by the circumstance of his being left more exclusively to the operation of the Holy Ghost—though I do not undervalue helps, nor reflect upon the zealous efforts which believers are making towards the house of Israel. But I think that when a Jew becomes a Christian, or when Christians are inviting them so to do, the standard of liberty from ceremonies should be exhibited as essentially belonging to a reception of the *substance* of types, &c., in Jesus of Nazareth. It appears to me quite necessary to them as Christians, because Jesus broke down the middle wall of partition to make of twain one new man.

I do believe indeed that Israel as a nation will be restored to Palestine before their reception of Messiah, and with an ardent adherence to their own laws; but this is a question distinct from that of a Jew now becoming a Christian.

It is a joyful consideration that this poor man came to you at this period, not only for the increase of knowledge, but for the comfort of your own soul upon this interesting theme. How much we may see, in such occurrences, that the times and seasons are with the Lord, and that He deals out His covenant-communications just when, and as, and where He will—at the same time observing a beautiful order and harmony in the different parts of His government. I love to contemplate His ways, and to recal the many wonderful circumstances which attended that period, when in the

midst of storm and trial the radiant bow shone so clearly, and shed its brilliance through our cloudy sky. It is still shining in radiance, my dear friend, and will ever be the same token of covenant love, on which our eyes may rejoicingly turn !

Your late scenes of interest in the sick room of the saint, to whom Jesus has called you to minister, will introduce you into much of the same experience as that I now have. No doubt to me there are peculiarities belonging to the situations connected with the relative ties I feel. Yet we can say, that as it respects the contemplation of these visitations, as robbed of their bitterness in Jesus our Lord, we are alike privileged. My reflections are raised unto blessed regions, as I listen to my dear child's midnight hours, and in the midst of all which nature feels, tributes of blessing and praise rise up to my soul's Beloved for those unspeakable mercies which are shed on the dear vessel of mercy. Thanks be to His name, He has taken her into His arms of love, and will do with her what is best. As to those who remain in the wilderness, the same tender care is extended as when taken home ;—faithfulness attends the Saviour's *whole* government, and under it we are privileged to live. It is indeed a great distinction bestowed upon us that we are not only under it, but have grace so much to delight in it, so that even on those subjects nearest our desires—I mean the going home to His presence above—we are satisfied to leave it with Him to determine when this shall be. No storm will come that can drive us *out* of our hiding-place; and since tempests and storms are means to make us love our place of refuge more, we need not be careful whether they be many or few.

I think the various dispensations which have come upon us lately, and the various evils which have of late

distracted the church, have been very serviceable as to private individual advances in the Spirit. I trust you and I can both say this, my brother, and that we are rooting, and rising upwards too, in the vigour which we derive from our *life*,—the Lord blessing us through trial. It is impossible to make you understand by letter half of the painful accompaniments which have come along with the fatal views which have troubled us.

Farewell, my beloved brother, the Lord in his richest mercies bless you. All here unite in love; and the dear flock also ask often to send love to you.

Believe me in the dearest bonds of Jesus, &c.

M. S.

CLXXX.

Satisfaction—Uncomplaining whilst expectant—Stormy Days—Prognosticating Signs—Curates—Family—Salutations.

MY BELOVED ——,

IT seems to me so very long since we exchanged any sentiments, that I long to hear from you; and had I not hoped that before this time I should have received some communication leading me to hope I should speedily embrace you, I would have written; but no such welcome tidings are brought, and I fear you may yet be kept in town. I hope it is not on dear ——'s account; more favourable statements have been made of her health, and if these have been confirmed, I trust she is as far restored as we can reasonably hope for her. Delicate and declining she is likely to remain, but if the decay of the outward tabernacle be attended with spiritual internal growth, all is well. Her afflictions have

been great, but these may be tokens of tenderest love; and I am sure, if they are sanctified, she, dear sufferer, will accept the voice as that of a Father calling her to increase in the treasures which are abiding. Tell her, my dear ——, that I affectionately bear her before the Lord, entreating that her whole soul may be embued with the unction which heals and sanctifies; and which will also abundantly *satisfy*; for it is the office of Him, who came in the name, to testify of Jesus, and he is *satisfaction* to the devoted heart.

And how is it with you, my dear girl? Are you resting in the open arms of the Lord with all the delight of an appropriating faith? And do you feel the unspeakable blessedness of being in fellowship with Him? Oh! it is our only true bliss thus to be held to His bosom, and thus to know that He is ours. And I pray you, love, hold fast this privilege. It is a strong and dangerous temptation, when persons are *contenting* themselves with a lower attainment. I know that it does not belong alike to all to enter into the full assurance that has joyous accompaniments; but it ought not to be allowed that we should *reason* ourselves into satisfaction without it. Dependant and uncomplaining we ought to be, but prayerful and expectant notwithstanding; and solicitous also, not by any negligence of ours to grieve Him by whom the powerful witness is given.

What an immediate advantage is found, even in the common concerns of this life, when we live in the habit of secretly talking with God; how sweetly does His revealed presence calm and equalize all our feelings, and check those excitements which are apt to trouble us when we lose our watch! And if the advantage be so great in the common events, O how valuable is it when visitations of more than ordinary trial come upon us! It is blessed, when the trial finds us *already* in

the enjoyed refuge, rather than when we have, as to *experience*, to seek it in the storm.

We are now living in stormy days. Alas! the elements of the world are all in action. Were this all, we should have no cause for wonder; for it is ever opposed to Christ, and in action against His kingdom; but ours are days stormy with dissension amidst the professed subjects of that kingdom, and moving the accomplishment of the threat—"Judgment must begin at the house of God." These, however, my dear —, are the fulfilment of *prophetic warnings*, and teach us the truth of God's testimony, and the importance of standing clear of all confederacy, according to the injunction laid upon God's people.

It is lamentable that any one knowing the truth, and professedly hating the spiritual lie, should be entangled so to act as if the lie were to be tolerated. This has been first the downfall of our nation; for it fell when it lost its peculiarly *Protestant* character, and has been sinking lower in political as well as religious importance ever since; and it will be the correction, awfully experienced, of the professing church also, for it has been defaced in its beauty ever since it consented to think it could embrace the idolatrous adversary of Christ. But the Lord will pour confusion upon all the speculations that arise out of carnal policy, and will give honour only where *simplicity* gives honour to him.

Thanks be to the everlasting covenant, there is, and will ever be, a remnant keeping their garments white, and they shall walk in white with the Lamb. O my beloved —, be stedfast in this privilege, and never be mixed up with the elements and expediences adopted by sophisticated minds. I think if there were no other argument to prove the *practical* use of a sober reception of the doctrine of Christ's second coming than that

which arises out of the *times* and their perils, by which His coming is preceded, here we have a powerful one. I find it so ; for reading what are the signs, and seeing them so clearly forming, I find it prove a caution against what might otherwise pass unobserved, or be allowed, and so beguile the soul ; whereas, with a mind alert upon this subject, we carry about with us the wholesome caution spoken by Jesus—“ Go not after them.”

I scarcely know why my thoughts have taken this flow whilst writing to you ; but I have written in the fulness of my heart. May the Lord go along with the subject, and quicken you and me, and all of us, into more lively realization of the great privilege of living by faith, and seeing the Lord in all around us—yea, in the darkest cloud !

You will be glad to hear that we seem happily supplied with a curate ; we hope he will be accepted ; he seems diligent, affectionate, and possessing talent ; and if the Lord is with him, we shall have increase still in this long cared-for vineyard. Our dear F—— too is a pleasing young man—very modest, so that what he is does not immediately appear ; but to those who can appreciate such hidden beauty, he is valuable ; and to us he is very precious. Our sweet children are all well and promising. H—— left his two sweet babes, you know, and they are a dear charge. These domestic claims increase responsibility and occupation ; but we take them in and for the Lord, and He will be our sufficiency.

When you write, pray tell me of all my dear friends ; tell me of Mrs. —— and her dear children, and of D——’s, and whether they both abide true to their Lord—H—— rejoicing in the liberty of love, and her dear sister *laying hold* upon the hope. Ah ! tell her there is nothing else she can grasp so as to *retain*. May

the Lord decide her for Himself. And tell me of my dear —— ; how her mind is affected now, and how her body is ? And let me hear of —— , and you all, and of when you purpose to come back to us. God bless you all ! God fill you with peace in believing ; and ever believe me, my beloved girl, your most affectionate, in the dearest bonds,

M. S.

CLXXXI.

Returning Health—Afflictions—Sympathy—Miracles—Gifts—Arguments.

IT was an unfeigned joy to my heart, my beloved brother, when your hand-writing once more gladdened my eyes, for in truth some thoughts of affectionate solicitude have exercised my mind respecting your bodily state,—for your precious immortal part I can have no anxiety ; but, after so severe a visitation as that which has been now upon you, of course the heart is alive to cares. I bless the Lord for his goodness in raising you again, and beseech him to accompany this revival of the outward man with *increase* of strength for the work before you, and with every affectionate endearment given out of his own bosom of love !

I can well understand what exhaustion must have attended the labours of this season under your great debility. We can only say that, were it not for the omnipotence of our Helper, we must on such occasions utterly sink ; but indeed I need not say on *such* occasions—on *all* occasions we live by supernatural strength, and are abiding monuments of the Lord's faithfulness in every interest that we have. I trust that for the sake of all who love you, and for the furtherance of the cause

of Him we supremely love, it may be the divine will to perfect your recovery, and that when I next read your lines I shall be greeted with a testimony that joy and health are in your dwelling ! I think at this moment I see you with a misgiving kind of incredulous smile as you read of joy thus connected ; and perhaps, my brother, from your pained heart a sigh also will escape. I sympathize deeply in all of this description, by which your spirit is exercised, knowing and admitting as I must, the many causes you have for sorrow ; yet it is not impossible to combine *our* kind of joy with *this* kind of sorrow, and therefore I will not recal my words. Perhaps too the Lord may, in due time, cheer you with brighter hopes respecting * * *. How sad it seems that experience like that passed through should not be persuasive ; but how true it is that nothing short of the Holy Spirit's power can subdue the heart to Christ, or persuade it into its own best happiness. May this power be given in this behalf !

For you, my beloved brother, it is that I feel in this matter with exceeding sympathy ; for I can enter into the variously conflicting thoughts and emotions which your comprehensive view of the situation will call forth. * * * * * May our merciful Lord direct what best to do : He takes those concerns with all others into his merciful bosom ; and we are privileged to receive them back again from their place of repose as fashioned by his direction and gracious will. I have found this, my brother, in cases of much affliction, and therefore speak to you as having experience as well as affection dictating my desire and prayer for your peace. We will bless the Lord that he is still under the sound of the precious salvation of Jesus ; and our *hope* shall be cherished by thinking of the freeness and invincible energy of the visits of divine love.

Thank you, my friend, for all the exchange of sympathy I receive from you. It is sweet thus to realize the bonds of Jesus, and thus to express the congeniality of soul and sentiment which we have obtained in our Living Head. Much sweeter will be that realization of privilege which is rapidly coming on, when in Jesus' presence these things shall be known in their sublimest extent. The allegory is *very* interesting, to myself it is of course *touching* and *instructive*. *My* little plant is ever reminding me of the frailty of the vessel in which it stands; and the *nature* of that appointment, by which this memorial is kept in mind, is calculated to impress the lesson very forcibly—she might be gone in a moment * * * * but this is with the Lord. From her earliest moments she has been offered up by my heart, and if the offering should be called to occupy a higher and better region, I believe sufficient grace would be provided by Him who is exhaustless in love, if I may so speak. The trial when contemplated by natural affection is unspeakable; but when felt along with Jesus' arms, it will not overwhelm. What is it we can ask for ourselves, or ours, but to be *at home* in the bosom of our Lord?

Your little allegory came at a moment when its voice may reach farther than to one. You have heard me speak of Mrs. C——, and her loss of four little babes—they are at this moment watching over their only little one in the expectation that like the rest it will go. The exercise is painful to both parents, but borne with believing dependence. I have sent them your lines.

* * * * It is distressing to children of God to have such concerns pressing for attention, when they would gladly have no pursuits or thoughts but what tend heavenward; but we have to learn how by grace thoughts may reach to heaven, even through this earthly

medium--and how human cares *can* lead closest to divine rest;—were it not so, the Lord would not mingle such ingredients in the cup of human life.

In respect of your important question, my beloved friend, put in the corner of your letter, I reply, that certainly I think we are led to look for an extraordinary influence of the Holy Ghost upon and in the church—*according to the circumstances* requiring it—in *any* age or dispensation. The gospel dispensation *has* had its attendant witness in this way in all the periods past, and will no doubt, in all that remain. And should the time arrive, when it may be *necessary to confirm the gospel* by miracles, as in its infancy, then the Holy Ghost will give this description of extraordinary gift. We do not find, I think, an express promise, which teaches us to look for these, excepting as belonging to the establishment of the gospel amongst the unchristianized world, or as the souls of the saints may call for *extraordinary* communications under *extraordinary* persecution, &c. We are not to limit the Lord: He *can* do what he *has* done, and will do it again if required; but in the instances where this argument is urged at present it appears to me to be *out of scripture bounds*. There is no *call* for the gift—no *end* in the way in which it is used—no unity amongst such as boast it—and worse than this, there is the *corruption in doctrine* which it seems is to be upheld by these pretensions. Perhaps you have seen the public statements upon these occurrences, which are, I think, very conclusive in respect of the *individual instance* where the pretension is made. And as to the degree of impartation which we are to exercise in respect of the gifts themselves, I think, my brother, we should be simply governed by what we see to be the divine rule of government; as God does nothing without an end suitable to the glorious

Worker. Miraculous gifts are not for men established in the truth, nor for individual distinctions—and cannot be from God where *truth* is not maintained. These serve for confirmation before the heathen, but when christianity is *established*, the witness to its power seems more consistently to be by the *internal* invincible power of the Holy Ghost. Surely *I* should say, my brother, the time is not yet when such gifts are requisite, if ever they may be; and if they do come we also know that *false* prophets, &c., also shall do signs and wonders, &c. &c., to deceive if it were possible the very elect. I know not, my beloved friend, if I make my opinion plain in this little hasty reply—I *mean* to say that I feel the importance of being guarded against delusions in *this day of delusions*. I remember, certainly, that we are to expect *lying pretensions* of this description in the last days—that they will be subtle and deceiving, and that we are forewarned not to go after them. *Against these* therefore I pray to be kept and animated. Should real influences of this kind come, because the times claimed them, I trust I should be enabled to discriminate, and not to deny; but they must have the *stamp* and be unquestionable in their *tendency*—else they cannot be of God. And unless we were *promised* these things expressly in these times of termination to earthly things, I do not think we should be looking for them. It appears to me that Jesus will come to condemn an unbelieving people resisting an *already attested* gospel. And that saints will be replenished with wonderful increase of the Holy Ghost to keep them in pure vision of the Lord, and in merciful elevation of character, and joy in the Lord.

Some people say miraculous powers would never have ceased from the church, if *faith* had not declined. Is not this a false argument? Has not the church had ex-

traordinary *energies* of faith in Him since the ceasing of miracles ?

Is not this ascribing too much to the endowment ?

Is it not speaking as if the working of miracles was a work at the *option* of believers, and in *their power* according to faith, and not according to immediate revelation of God's will, and *working* of this faith to the act ?

Would it not be like keeping the church in her infancy, as needing such sensible tokens for assurance ?

And is it not derogatory to the mighty working of the Holy Ghost ; who, independently of outward signs, casts down imaginations, &c., before the cross ?

I now say farewell, my ever-beloved brother. * *
The Lord bless, comfort, and cherish you, is my constant and faithful prayer. I am ever most affectionately yours,

M. S.

CLXXXII.

Delays not Denials—Effect of Trials—The triumphant Work—Influence of Assurance rightly received—Two Instances considered.

I BEGAN to fear, my beloved friend, that a return of indisposition had afflicted you, when, after expecting a letter on Saturday night, I did not see your welcome direction ; but I thank God that although you have been ill, it has not been a suffering of the same description as that which so seriously threatened your precious life.

I enter most entirely into the nature of those desires, which will prevail in your heart respecting the blessedness of going home ; yet, when I consider the value of your labours here below—the case of your dear family—

and the bereavement to those who love you with which such a dispensation would be attended—and the many interests which are involved in this one event—I cannot but feel and see that the *delay* of your final rest is in mercy. Thanks be to our Lord that delays are not *denials*; and that, although we do not always receive the blessing we desire so speedily as our hearts are disposed to ask, we are sure of the gift ere long, and that every thing we need, and all that can render us fully blest, *is* ours! O how full is that testimony—“All are yours, for ye are Christ’s.” It is however a joy to my soul that your spirit, eagle-like, soars upwards; and that a strong wing and vigorous eye are bestowed, enabling you to look within the veil, and to rise to the objects which are contemplated there.

It is our privilege, my brother, to live *out* of the world whilst in it, and to be closely enfolded also in those arms where our heaven is found. Happy is it for those who can appropriate this portion, and know that to *live* is Christ, and to die is gain! How wonderful is that life of faith into which we are introduced, and how mysterious the power we have of combining increased tenderness towards the creature with advancing abstraction from it; and fervency of zeal towards the interests of our Lord in the wilderness, with such a powerful impulse of the soul to the glories that are in the Eden above. Yet so it is,—and with those affections we experience the mind of Christ, and are made partakers of that Spirit by which He was animated whilst on earth. This is an unspeakable blessing; for to be as He was in the world must needs generate confidence that we shall be like what He is when our mortality is swallowed up of life. How different it is to be groaning in the body with a desire to put off *its* burdensome accompaniment, to that disposition which,

as the Apostle describes, longs for the consummation of the promise, and sighs and groans not so much for deliverance from the evil, as for the inheritance of the good,—“ Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon,” &c. Ah, my beloved friend, let us rejoice in the further testimony that He who has wrought in us for this self-same thing is our own mighty unchanging Friend, and will bear us through all those afflicting steps and dispensations by which we are thus matured for the vision. Had it not been that He can search the deep mystery of necessity that our sinfulness has induced in our heart, O how awfully should we have missed the application of the comprehensive remedies that are treasured up in Him. But since He discerns the dark and deep recesses of the heart, and *in* them all the abominations and all the misery that is concealed there, we may rejoice in the persuasion that a *perfect* cure will be effected. Great is our blessedness, therefore, that neither sin nor sorrow shall eventually prevail. The beloved Sacrifice, the effectual Saviour, will glorify himself by a *triumphant* work. This is my consolation and joy; so that whilst every day’s experience serves to increase the knowledge of the malignity of sin, and of the inveterate evil which dwelleth in us, the knowledge serves to produce a more abiding penitential faith, with more abounding joy in the Covenant Deliverer. I mark the same progressive movements in your experience, my beloved brother, and I trust that we are each hastening rapidly to that perfection without which we never can be satisfied.

Yes, my dear friend, I do indeed not only prize the privilege of *assurance* in my own experience, but unfeignedly desire that the whole mystical body may be embued with its joyful and sanctifying influence. I believe that there is no possession more instrumental to the

services which love would yield, and that filial obedience is in proportion to the degree in which this privilege is known,—it appears to me to be an essential part of the life of faith, and an express provision in the covenant. We know indeed that He whose office it is to be the witness, will not impart the blessing out of *the prescribed way*,—and perhaps many miss this portion, because they do not like the way, and then find fault and cavil against the blessing itself; but when the surrender is entire, and the soul given to Christ, it will follow that we are enabled to say, “My beloved is mine, and I am His.” It is sweet to know this distinction,—it is sweet also to *cherish* it, the very means by which it is furthered in the soul—being such as an upright and devoted one most delights to pursue. How blessed is it to *seek* our soul’s Beloved—to sigh after and unto Him—to be spent for Him—to live to Him—and assuredly in these exercises we *find* Him! We feel that the eye of observation and love is ever on our faith!

I observe what you say respecting the sentiments expressed by the Christian Observer,—perhaps they may savour of the mind you suspect; and it is well ever to be on our watch against the insidious manner in which attacks are made against *the Foundations*; for if these be removed, what can the righteous do?

Perhaps in respect of —, there may be some error on both sides. It appears to me that too much has been made of that event, as *miracle*, in it. We cannot doubt the readiness of the Lord to answer prayer, and that in many instances He has in power and grace manifested immediate reply to the wrestler. We also know how *some* maladies are very much dependant upon the *energy* put forth, or otherwise, in the patient; and if sufficient motive or excitement were given, they might be removed. In this person’s case possibly these things were

in action,—fervent prayer with energetic exertion, God blessing the means: but I do not think it should be deemed a *miracle*, according to the statement of facts laid before us. However, this has nothing to do, I believe, in the principal person in question with the doctrines of error to which you allude,—say rather it has been a circumstance seized upon by others holding those doctrines, and made subservient to give credit to a party. I only say this to you, my brother. I am accustomed to decline giving judgment, except when asked in cases like these; being persuaded that as to *individuals* we are quite incompetent to judge. I will also say to you, that in respect of Isabella Campbell's narrative, my own heart and mind received from the little I read of it, an impression that did not accord with the general opinion expressed. Of course I said nothing but that it was not a favourite statement with me, for it might be all quite what she felt; but I confess I did not feel a *sympathy* in it. It seemed to me too high wrought, and too much to savour of *natural* excitement. I have therefore said to my own particular friends that I should not recommend the reading of it. It does not appear to me that strong and settled assurance is usually given in this form; and therefore it as well, I think, to be careful of seeming to make it a standard. But all this has nothing to do with the *individual* state of the departed. We know by observation and experience how much of strange fire can continue to mingle with that which is kindled by the Spirit from above, even in the vessels of mercy. I believe, however, that further remark upon those things which have led to the revived view of them, is unnecessary, since it seems the whole is sinking into obscurity, and that the *erroneous views* connected with them are now gathering into the boundary of a sect—a separated party. Our Lord will

keep the humble soul,—in this we may be confident. We therefore need not fear for his little flock: knowing also that if from amongst these there may be found some who stray, His purpose will fetch them home, and search them out in their wanderings. * * * * You would be delighted to see the increased energy of —, who labours most abundantly, and by the Lord's mercy has been kept up the whole of the winter, and is incessantly occupied; for this we cease not to give thanks to our God, who *overflows* in compassion, and is better and more loving and gracious than our utmost thoughts! M—— is still an invalid, but able to do her work, though with langour and suffering; the Lord taking occasion to demonstrate in her how His strength is perfected in weakness. * * * * I am not well, but my room is ever my sweet and sacred retreat; and as we have had a storm during the last fortnight, I have been more satisfied to be laid aside. All storm is now gone from our atmosphere and scenes. A sweet and soft zephyr is blowing, birds are testifying their joy in the departure of the snow, and the green herbage again cheers the eye. O how these things exhibit spiritual truths, and call to our remembrance the sweet voice of the Spirit speaking to us in the Scripture by these figures;—and to the praise of our heavenly Father how can we, my brother, read and interpret and appropriate these precious lessons! * * * * Pray for us as we do for you,—think of us also as we do of you, and let us ever rest in the bosom of our Lord;—there every care is well reposed, and we are welcome to tell Him, and to trust Him for all.

Farewell, my ever dear friend and brother; may all that my heart asks for you be given from above, then you will have an abundant portion! I am ever yours most affectionately in the precious bonds of Jesus,

M. S.

CLXXXIII.

Supports under Affliction—Adaptation of Trials—Sympathy with the Sufferer—Retirement—Antidote to present Evil—Enjoyment of a Sick-room—Zeal of a Friend.

No, my brother—I do not think you are *too much* concerned about the providential afflictions with which the Lord has been pleased to exercise you; on the contrary, I have continually meditated upon the wonderful faithfulness of the Lord, as manifested in your sustained soul, and have been grateful to Him for thus evincing how much he proportions our strength to our day. I consider your trials as in themselves most grievous and overwhelming. Perhaps few persons have sorrows of a more distressing nature, nor cares more corroding in their character. Yet, under all you are enabled to repose upon the hand you realize, and to accept the dispensation with a spirit of filial gratitude and trust. This I have marked through all your letters; and I do not fail to give the tribute of praise to our dear Lord, by whom your eye of faith is animated and strengthened to look upon the bow in the cloud. But, my beloved brother, we do not doubt the promise; He who has placed us under the teeming covenant of love and grace, from which blessings are ever descending, will not fail us in finding blessing, even when wrapt up in a dark disguise; and our love will unite with faith, so as to render these discoveries and this method acceptable, and subjects for praise. But surely all this is supernatural; and well may we express our grateful wonder at the way of our Lord. That he exactly suits the affliction to some evil in us, which is to be mortified, or to some grace He has given, which must be manifested, we assuredly know, as taught by long experience, and

now no longer either of us a novice in affliction's school. To the end of suffering days we will say, "All is well;" and as we draw nearer to the world of bliss, testify yet more that in the Lord we have not only our portion but our rest. O what privileges are these—*inherited* also, and an inalienable property, giving riches enough for our journey; and how much for home we are not able fully to conceive. May we, my brother, ever possess a power with increasing energy to lay hold upon the kingdom in its blissful extent; and although some of its glories may not as yet be looked upon, may its satisfying character be proved! In our *ripening* experience, how much of this simplicity is given. Surely whilst charities increase and overflow towards the innumerable claimants around us, love rises higher and higher, to centre itself in the bosom of the Lord; and we feel the power truly to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee."

It would be very sweet and refreshing, my dear brother, were we permitted to speak face to face upon these precious possessions. Many times I recollect the rich communion in which we found the Lord, and drew from the living fountain the draughts that gave the sense of vigour to our new life. But when I call these things to mind, in reference to my own soul, my thoughts immediately settle chiefly upon your soul, my friend; because I know that in your present circumstances there are not many with whom you can take sweet counsel, neither perhaps that delight of labour in the vineyard which belongs more especially to a place long under culture; but in this, as in every other thing, our submissive faith is called into action, and we have to believe assuredly that hidden love is in this dispensation likewise.

You would be pleased with the alteration that has been effected in Stonefall dwelling since you were here, because it affords me a room where privacy and peace seem to pervade. I am thrown further from the front of the house, and my window opens for my outlet into the garden, and gives me the *opportunity* for retirement. I cannot say, however, that much of this has been realized yet; for pressing engagements come one after another, and I find less time for private delights. But we are not to live unto ourselves. Were I to obey the desire of nature, I should covet and seek more of solitude; and sometimes a sigh after more enlarged occasions for the precious delights of meditation will break from my heart. The weakness of the mortal tabernacle prevents the dedication of whole nights to this enjoyment, and will not let us indulge all that the longing soul would ask; but we may rest, for the Lord is our ever-present habitation; and notwithstanding there is this want of more, we *have* enough.

What a mysterious existence is ours! what a hidden, what a blissful portion! I am quite sure that your heart will respond to mine; therefore I speak out its rising dictates; and since we are many times placed in situations which are painful to the spirit, it is well to turn unto those truths which administer alleviations to sorrow, and are the antidote to present evil.

I have been ill since I last wrote. Such periods are *wisely* salutary. It would seem surprising to one not able to appreciate the special enjoyment belonging to a believer's sick room, were I heard to say, O how I love to be placed there! Yet so it is. And no surprise arises in your mind, my brother, when listening to such a sentiment in sacred congeniality. We have found, even when occasionally oppressed by pain and langour, that there is much privilege possessed in trying our

wings, as it were, and anticipating that full discharge from this tabernacle that will give us to higher scenes. Some interesting occurrences, however, in this place, and among some of my early friends, have helped to show me how expedient and good it is for a little while longer to remain below. The Lord has providentially opened the way for some persons lately to arrange for coming to H——; one especially, who was greatly attached to me, to whom, in my beginning-pilgrimage, I was made useful. This is to me an interesting occurrence.

Our beloved Mrs. —— is rapidly pressing onwards; her lovely diligence and zeal are to the glory of the Lord, and she is a precious companion in pilgrimage. We meet in the Lord's work, and she is much acknowledged, I think, in her witness in those circles where she is occasionally thrown,—her resolute separation from the world being conspicuous and simple. You will rejoice in this. Let your spirit be with us, my beloved brother, and still keep this association with the flock that ever loves you, and with whom your remembrance is lively and affectionate.

Mr. C—— is still well and active, full of work. What a blessing this is, especially with so young a curate, who though so zealous in preaching, and acceptable with the generality of the people, wants that kind of experience which is suitable to many in the place. The association, therefore, is the more desirable, and especially for sick rooms and social evenings, of which there are many just now in the town.

Farewell,—the clock strikes,—I am to prepare for a call. I cannot stay longer in this employment. Your affectionate sister in the Lord,

M. S.

CLXXXIV.

Sacred Stillness—Dying Hours—Opened Door—Adhering Faith.

IT is a subject of sorrow to me, my beloved friend, that you should be such a sufferer, and that in addition to other trials, belonging to this earthly scene, your frame should be distressed with sickness. What can we say in such visitations but that we will seek our consolation in Him whose tender mercies extend to every hour, and reach us in every pain? This I know is the refuge and rest you seek. I know also that you find the blessing; and in this my faith and hope are assured. May abounding impartations of this holy fellowship be given out of Jesus into your waiting and dependent soul.

I trust we have each possessed the endearing presence of our Lord, and that we can afresh testify of His faithfulness and truth. Are not such visitations amongst our dearest possessions? O yes, my friend; and even when by reason of the nature of the malady we are pressed down, or incapacitated for lively exertion or exercises, there is a sacred stillness and repose of heart, whilst resting in Jesus, that is unspeakably precious. I sometimes surmise that dying hours may be of this kind,—the weakness of the outward frame being too great for the *expression* of what replenishes the inner man.

Sweet will be the intimation that *that* hour is come. Willingly as we tarry here, in consideration of the innumerable reasons that exist for rendering this life desirable, how much more alert we shall feel for turning our thoughts upon the opened door which gives us to enter into the presence of our Lord. It is blessed to live to Him here,—but much more blessed so to live to

Him as they do who are disengaged from earthly house, and have no hindrances of which to complain. Let us, my brother, every day look out for this blissful hour, and cheer ourselves in the moments of conflict by recollections full of home. * * * * * However, it is not the protracted visitation of affliction that will exhaust the patient faith wrought by the Eternal Spirit; and I suppose that is the reason why our Lord so exercises His children. He loves to glorify himself, and to demonstrate the excellence of His own supernatural work; and I know of no way by which, to my mind, this appears more to be secured, than that of shewing the *adhering* and victorious principle of faith. And what is it which we love but the very same design which our Lord keeps in view—our sighs and breathings carrying with them this expression, and asking a power to glorify Him? As strength is perfected in weakness, we may confidently expect prosperity and full gratification to our desires!

I must say farewell, leaving my paper unfilled; but I know that to-morrow I shall not have a minute, and therefore I will not keep my letter back. All unite in tender love to you and your whole circle. The Lord bless you always!

Ever believe me, in Jesus' bonds, &c.

M. S.

CLXXXV.

Witness of inward Integrity—Source of Consolation—Covenant stability.

How truly, my beloved friend, have you manifested in your affection towards me the nature of that blessed

bond by which we are united, and in which, I trust, we shall abide realizing the end of our faith in our perfected union above in and with Him whom we love. * * * It is very sweet, my dear friend, to hold converse in the power of that high fellowship which is known by the children of God; and thanks be to His name we have not unfrequently found it together. How much and how deeply I sympathized with you in the trials that happened when you were at ——, and how entirely I have entered into your feelings I need scarcely say; everything belonging to that period seemed marked by some striking accompaniment, and in each no doubt a loving lesson from the Lord was designed. It appears to me that the *chief* lesson was this, to make you satisfied to receive the *inward* witness to your integrity *alone*, and without the acknowledgment which your conduct justly demanded from man. No doubt we are liable to a temptation in respect of our *integrity*. We may be *too* anxious that it should *appear*; and under a plausible appearance of zeal and simplicity it is possible that we may have a hidden leaven either of self-righteousness, or of desire after the creature's approval, which we think we may properly expect, as the effect of our uprightness and unquestionable devotion; but oh, my dear friend, even christians can be backward to give us such a tribute, and our Lord is wise and merciful in teaching us to relinquish this desire, to be satisfied with the praise that comes from Him *only*, and to leave our character even as believers to Him. This we learn through many a distressing exercise; but it is well to learn it, and to be driven by the cold winds that come from the *region where Zion dwells*, closer to that bosom where there is no coldness, no injustice, no disregard of the uprightness of our hearts. I speak experimentally upon this point, having had bitter know-

and we must be on our guard against desponding thoughts. Never let us lose sight of the invisible One; our faith is imparted that it may raise us victorious over this present evil world, and believing as we do "that Jesus is the Christ," we must know likewise that as the Christ he will invincibly rule. "The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of it he will restrain." Let us cheer and animate each other by these assurances, and when the clouds look black and nature begins to fear, call to our remembrance how our soul's beloved is in the midst of the storm, and that his way reacheth unto, yea is in the clouds. Weak as we are without Him, O how strong can we be made in Him; and since He is our dwelling-place and perpetual abode, this strength will be ours according to the day.

My spirit sympathizes with yours, my dear friend, in everything which you express. I also enter deeply into the nature of those excitements which must be occasioned in your heart every day, situated as you are in the very scene of confusion and threatening perils; but whilst my soul shares with you in these exercises, I confide in the Lord for your being persuaded that his vigilance will never relax, and that He will watch over you night and day. I do indeed look upon the state of the times as indicating the rapidly-ripening close of the present state of things, to yield unto that glorious restitution which will rectify all evil, and silence every proud adversary. Looking out as we are for our bridegroom's return, we cannot but observe how much the events of the day agree with His warning voice as spoken of old, and as teaching us *when* to expect that He will come. To us, therefore, the advent of our beloved will not be an astonishing occurrence; we look for it, we love it, we desire it, and according to what you express in yours, we are ready to hail him with a

welcome from all our powers, and to rise to meet him in the air. Souls thus imbued have a precious promise, my friend; “To them that *look for Him* shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” We are privileged to lay hold upon this engagement, and we will rejoice that then we shall behold him, not as a man of sorrows, bearing the weight of sin, but as the glorious king, exhibiting his triumph in himself and in his saints. May the Comforter help us by faith to bound over these gloomy mountains or trying scenes which lie between *this* day and *that*, and cause us to lose the apprehensions of nature in the joyous anticipations of grace. We will pray for each other, my beloved friend, and for all the little flock, and we will trust the eternal Shepherd out of whose hand none can pluck us! * * * * Farewell, my beloved friend, and believe me at all times your faithfully affectionate friend in the dearest bonds,

M. S.

CLXXXVII.

The Bond of Christians—Disappointment in Professors—Sanctification.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

MANY are the occasions in which my soul maintains a fellowship with yours in the Spirit, and my heart was specially drawn out this morning in supplication for you. I close the day’s engagements, therefore, by dropping upon paper some of the feelings with which my bosom is filled. It is very sweet, my friend, thus to realize the blessed union subsisting between the members of our own honoured and beloved head, and to

know likewise that after having had a sympathy with Him and each other in this suffering vale, we shall together rise to the height whereupon we shall stand, and reign, and sing in lasting triumph and glory. Frequent contemplation of the renewed scene tends powerfully to elevate us now above the present, and since all below is such a region of unsatisfying or distressing subjects, it is happy for us that in this way we can sometimes, at least, lose sight of it altogether. Ah, my beloved friend, how much I feel this to be applicable in your case, surrounded as you are by circumstances which must needs occasion many a serious thought ; but this I know, that Jesus, loving you as he does, will fold you proportionably closer to his heart in conscious peace and power as the winds blow louder or rougher, and in such a station you will assuredly find strength and joy. My earnest prayer is that you may abound in these, and sweetly rest upon this bosom of love. We have the cheering assurance also that in a little time He that shall come will come, and will not tarry, so that whilst faith embraces his promise, patience can wait his time. Your last letter was very refreshing to me, I need scarcely add, therefore it was welcome. Streams of this description exhilarate us in the way, and still more endear the great source of all our mercies, since we well know that not one drop of heavenly peace falls on the soul ; but as it is (as it were) shaken from the tree of life upon us, and when it comes as conveyed through one dear to us we do not forget who formed the bond, and who gives the blessing. In this way our enjoyment in Christ is multiplied upon us. Is it not very gracious in Him thus to sanctify to us what might otherwise be a snare, especially in affections, that being strong and susceptible would, if left to their own tendency, entwine around the creature, or be entwined, for in both

respects we are in danger ; yet blessed be our Lord, He breaks the danger and blesses the bond !

I observe all you say upon this subject respecting the trial arising out of disappointments experienced from *christians*, or *professed christians* ; and I have felt, and do feel with you, that it is to be numbered amongst our most trying exercises ; but these are things we need, they serve to rectify the affections of our hearts, to moderate expectations, and to put a purer influence into our feelings by divesting them of calculations for *self-gratification*,—in short they render our love and charity more like unto His whose mind and image we desire to bear. Thus we derive the benefit and grow into simplicity, being grateful if sympathy is given to us, but *independent* of it, except as it is ours in our one *never-failing* fountain, our dear Redeemer. How very much you, my beloved friend, have thus been purified ; and how are you still, as it seems, under this hallowing operation ; and O what cause for gratitude is it that persevering love is thus manifested from Him whose love and smile is to you your heaven and your world.

The doctrine of imputed sanctification, of which you speak as having darkened the testimony of some preachers who were accounted sound in the faith, has not been so much in the back ground in this country as probably it has been in Ireland. I have observed from communications received from other friends in your poor country how this evil has apparently been making its advances with you. It has long, you know, been the tenet held by those who were termed antinomians, and who carry their view of eternal decrees into this spurious fruit ; but I have often been surprised that the text to which you refer as their ground should be considered by them such a stronghold for their doctrine, and it gives us demonstration of the weakness of their

argument. I suppose they draw the conclusion from sanctification standing in such close connection with righteousness in that passage, without considering that by the same rule it must be an imputed wisdom and imputed *redemption* also, which, I conclude, they must at once see to be an absurd idea,—since surely, as it respects *redemption*, either of the soul from perdition or of the body from corruption, it must be a benefit imparted and wrought individually in the subject of grace. And besides this there is great impropriety in separating righteousness and sanctification in respect of *imputation*; because the imputable righteousness of Christ necessarily *includes* both outward obedience and the inward spring of obedience, which is sanctification, else it is not righteousness such as answers Jehovah's requirements; for an action is weighed by this great Judge, by *motive* as well as *deed*; so that in this sense we have *in imputed righteousness* those two parts of the benefit, leaving a *further* benefit of sanctification, which Christ is made to us through *union*, becoming the source to us of that law of the spirit of life mentioned in Rom. viii. 2. Under the pretext, and with some under the real intention of exalting our Lord by this statement, persons do in fact circumscribe the benefits bestowed and lessen our receipts. But these are evils which have ever existed, and when I remember how it is said “It must needs be that heresies come, that they who are approved may be made manifest,—my mind is rendered quiet. Whatever happens in the church which accords with any part of revelation, we are instantly assured is under the peculiar government of the head, we thereby know that it shall be, and that it must work together for good to them that love the Lord. Let not our souls therefore be disturbed. Our Jesus reigns, and reigns for all who are beneath the banner of his love! However numerous

or mighty your adversaries, they cannot prevail ; and extremities are always opportunities making known his faithfulness and truth,—then his eternal perfections shall be our shield and buckler.

I must now drop my pen, the hour is late, and I am at present rather an invalid, having had a severe cold which threatened inflammation in my lungs. I am still unable to speak up without pain, but seem to be recovering. All these are very merciful visits from my beloved, and whisper to me that He will not be *very* long before he comes in a visit more decisive, more blessed still—but all is well to live or die! Farewell, my beloved friend, let us always bear each other before our God. Believe me in the dearest bonds your ever affectionate,

M. S.

CLXXXVIII.

Tokens of the Lord's Presence—Heirs together with Christ—Observations on Rom. viii. 17—23.

I DO UNFEIGNEDLY unite with you, my beloved friend, in giving praise to our dear Lord for the protection he extended to you in repassing the stormy waves, and bringing you once again into your own peaceful home. I think these are occasions wherein the heart is much called upon to utter His praise, and that a retrospect of the several events which occur during our separation from home is usually attended with powerful influences of the most affecting kind to a believer. We can discover in every turn of our way some token that the Lord is with us either in trials or deliverances—either in personal or relative concerns; and wherever

He is, we must needs discover also the manifestation of a covenant love that increasingly endears Him to our souls. I hope we shall number amongst these demonstrations of love that providence which introduced us to each other; for surely we together sometimes partook of refreshing draughts from the smitten rock; we could speak as they do who are privileged to animate and cheer each other on the way, by testifying of His omnipotent power, ever ready to save us and ever willing to shew the open face of a reconciled God turned on us with healing and with life. These are our privileges, as joint-heirs with Christ, and these we have *known* to be ours. O may we continually realize the same blissful portion, and live in an intimate fellowship with Jesus, our souls' beloved.

You ask me to express my views upon Rom. viii. 19—22: I should embrace the 23rd verse; it has much importance in giving light to the preceding passage, as also the 17th. My idea is this: The Apostle, reasoning upon the spiritual existence of the saints, and shewing that it is always attended with a measure of suffering, animates the sufferer by the high motives which faith can appreciate. Among these, he speaks of a joint heirship with Christ, which will be realized at the time when He and His people are *glorified together*. 17: a glory to be *revealed* in us. 18: the time for this revelation and heirship is that of the *first resurrection*. 23: then Christ and his people will reign visibly the 1,000 years. For this period the *creature* has *earnest expectation*, waiting for it as for the *manifestation* of the sons or children of God. What is meant by the *creature* is, as I suppose, expressly explained by the 23rd verse, there called the *redemption of the body*, groaned for by the whole man. The creature, or earthly tabernacle, was made subject to vanity, re-

duced, dying, passing away—not willingly ; we start from dissolution and cling to life ; but the saints are to remember their *hope*, even Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life ; who will deliver the creature also from the bondage of corruption, raise it from the grave, and make it partaker in the glory to be revealed, making it the restored companion of the perfected soul. We know the *whole creation* at large, as is asserted, intellectual or otherwise, groaneth ; and (22,) we feel that even the sealed saints, even they who have the indwelling Spirit, are not exempted from this condition of misery ; they pass a life of conflict and endure days of vanity. But to *them* a glorious change is ordained, sufficiently enrapturing and blissful to reconcile them to their passing experience of tribulation. This seems to me the simple exposition of the passage, corresponding with many others, especially Eph. i. 9—14. 1 Cor. xv. 21—23. 1 Thess. iv. 13—18. I am aware that there are many extraordinary opinions in this day upon this and many other Scriptures. We are to be upon our guard, my beloved friend, knowing that this is one of the signs we are to look for, as marking the eventful times in which we live, and that we must be prepared for a flood of novelties, speculations, new doctrines and wild theories, poured forth upon the church as one of Satan's last and malignant efforts, alas ! *prevailing* also, in many affecting instances, so as to deceive and draw away many who seemed as stars of the firmament ; yea, so as to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. O let us not be unmindful of the unceasing warnings of mercy we have in the Scriptures of truth. Let us not be corrupted from the simplicity of the faith. Let us not turn aside to fables ; let us not be carried away by every wind that blows ; but, living dependently and humbly, spread our sails to catch the pure winds of

heaven ; for these only will bear us to a peaceful shore. We have the comfort of knowing that we are kept by the power of God through faith to salvation. In this let us ever rejoice, and unite with our cheerful confidence in the Lord, vigilant resistance of every thing that savours of self-dependance or confidence in human wisdom. Thanks be to our Lord, He will keep us as the apple of His eye !

Farewell, my beloved friend. Ever believe me, your faithfully-attached sister in the blessed love of Jesus,

M. S.

CLXXXIX.

Foundations of spiritual Affections—Reduction of our own Will—Universal Pardon—Second Advent—Real Christian.

I HAVE not been so speedy in the expression of my affectionate interest in your concerns, and in all that is passing in your heart, as I would have been ; but the truth is, that I found so *much* to say, that I have not liked to take only passing opportunities. I believe, however, that this would have been more advisable, as I now begin to fear you will think I am unmindful of you ;—do not admit this thought. Affections that are based in the love of Jesus as their moving principle, do not fluctuate ; and I trust the communion we were privileged a little while to have together, was truly of this sacred character. The occupations I have had during the last summer have been very incessant ; by the Lord's mercy I have been so far strengthened as to pass through them without interruption ; but I carry about with me a sense of constant dependance, not only

for the supply of all spiritual sufficiency, but also for daily impartations of bodily strength. This is well,—for it reminds us of the uncertainty which belongs to present openings, and bids us work while it is day.

How gracious our Lord is in affording His children occasions in which they may be spent in His service; and when He wisely suspends them, in giving the Divine influence, by which they are made equally happy, from the consciousness of being in the path which He has appointed. Undoubtedly the most decisive demonstration of advance in the heavenly life is found in the reduction of our own will to the mind of our beloved Lord; and if He is pleased to effect this, through dispensations which oppose our natural judgment, and will shew us that He has in any degree already effected it, we will rejoice therein, as possessing a witness from the Spirit that is of more value than thousands of exercises of a more flattering description. I believe our hearts beat alike in this respect, and that we are by our Lord's dear indwelling prepared to follow Him; not anxious about the result, if only we may be persuaded that we are treading in His steps.

I turn to your little notes with deep interest; and were we now together, we might exchange many thoughts upon the subjects you propose for enquiry. We find how much more satisfactory it is, to be privileged by personal intercourse, than to be confined to the narrow compass of a sheet of paper, when matters of such eternal importance are before us; however, we may be thankful that there is some little ability given us, to convey through the medium of the pen what may put us in possession of each other's sentiments.

I conclude that the opinions which you state as embraced by Mr. ——, respecting universal pardon, are the same as those proposed by Mr. ——, and which

appear to me to be subversive of many essential doctrinal points. Such views decidedly interfere with the doctrine of election, and to my own judgment seem to arise out of a defective idea respecting the extent to which the *fall of man* has reached in the corruption of the will; indeed we shall probably discover, that all errors of this description have their origin in the want of a readiness to admit the *total* depravity and helplessness of man; since, were this allowed, it must bring us to the conclusion of ascribing the application and effectual power of the gospel, as well as the provision of its healing grace, to the sovereign act of an invincible Lord, working His own will in vessels of His own election. I think we *spoke* together upon this subject, when conversing of that last publication; and we were agreed, that there is a confusion in his statements of pardon and justification.

In order to understand the passage (2 Peter ii. 1.) of which you ask my opinion, I think we should in the first place consider, how Christ in His Mediatorial character is consecrated to be a *Head* of all creation, so as to be constituted the *Repairer* of the breach, the Resurrection, and the Life. In which sense I suppose we are to consider Him exercising a government, which we may divide into two parts; namely, His providential and His saving rule. All providential mercy being forfeited by transgression, can only be continued in virtue of the redemption that is in Christ; so that it may be said in this sense, *all* men have a benefit from His sacrifice,—they are redeemed, or bought off from immediate punishment, and the extent of present destruction, which is the proper desert of sin. In this sense I understand many passages of a similar kind; particularly, “He is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.” That is, He is the Resurrection and Life of His people

by a peculiar covenant, giving them imperishable existence in Himself; whilst other men also participate in acts of providence, by reason of His Headship and Rule, as Mediator.

The offence mentioned in 2 Pet. ii. 1, is presented under its aggravating circumstances, as being a denial of Him, to whom they were indebted for every mercy of the long-suffering government extended through His redemption. To my own mind this view is satisfactory; and certainly no argument that would propose the idea of a purchase-price paid by Christ, for the specified end of *saving a soul*, and yet failing to *effect* the end for which it was paid, can ever be satisfactory to one who values the blood in its precious excellency, and the Divine Will, in its sovereign and invincible character; since all such arguments cast some reflection upon one of these points, either as ineffectual or impotent. May we not conclude that some of those notions which are proposed by men, respecting the extent of Christ's salvation, may be owing to the want of discrimination in the offices of Christ, and from not observing how He is revealed in Scripture, as not only the Head of a Mystical Body in which He will be glorified, but as the Lord and Ruler and second Adam, who will be glorified in *Himself* as exercising an *universal* government, by which His righteousness, &c. are to be displayed and man left inexcusable, as condemned for deliberate apostacy, *developed* in its true nature, by reason of the mildness of that merciful rule under which he now lives?

You also wish my opinion of Luke xvii. 22—37, whether it is a passage entirely applicable to the second Advent? I conceive it to have an immediate reference to that event; but that, according to the method adopted in prophecy, it glanced at the judgments ready to fall

on Jerusalem, in which we possess a typical representation of many of those great accompaniments which we look for when Christ shall come again. It is evident that our Lord, when discoursing of His second coming, adopted a style which purposely threw a degree of obscurity upon the subject: this was necessary as belonging to *prophetic* revelation, wherein faith was to be in living exercise, and particularly was a method very serviceable to that generation of Israel to which He delivered His testimony.

The subject of the second Advent becomes increasingly interesting, as we contemplate the fulfilling of these events, which we have been looking for as ushering in that glorious period; and now that the river Euphrates, or Turkish power, seems to be exhausting, just in the way which the Spirit intimates, we understand at what period we have arrived, and that the sixth vial must be poured out. Let us, my beloved friend, receive all such intimations with a spirit of increased zeal, and seize the little space that may remain for sealing the servants of God in their foreheads, so as to admit the holy excitement which corresponds with the signs of the times. It is very animating to our faith to know, that He is nigh even at the door; and that He, for whose return the church has so long been looking with holy desire, is now about to fulfil the longings of His redeemed, and to manifest the true dignity of His espoused One. Whether we may live to behold His coming, as amongst those who will still be inhabitants of the earth, is not for us to consider as a matter of great importance; it is enough for us to know that we shall see Him as He is, and in the meantime to pray and hasten to the day, urging upon our fellow-pilgrims to be watching in their tower.

Now let me reply to the interesting question which

has been put to you by a friend, respecting the way to ascertain whether she is a real christian? It seems she has asked many creatures, for you tell me of *four* distinct directions, or replies, received from different persons. The first thing, therefore, that I would say is, *Has she asked the Lord?* I believe there is frequent want of simplicity and sincerity in these perpetual appeals to men, which no doubt will bring their own correction in *disappointments*; for the Lord is a jealous God! It is true, creatures may be great helps, and we must not despise the counsel of the Lord's people; but in cases of this description, it appears most likely the decision will be best given in *repeated appeals to the Lord*; He only can give a satisfactory answer, by the witness of the Holy Ghost. The most scriptural marks may be laid down, and men may state them according to their own individual experience, expecting that they must prove conclusive; but we find after all that the enquirer is left as uncertain and perplexed as ever; and in short, that the throne of grace must be more humbly and perseveringly visited, from whence the assuring testimony will in due time be satisfactorily given. It is our duty and privilege to seek assurance, but it is best found through habitual communion with the Lord. In this sweet exercise He will not fail to meet and bless the anxious soul. I remember a verse of a little hymn, which at this instant occurs to me, as very appropriate to such cases:—

“ Were half the breath thus vainly spent
To Heaven in supplication sent,
Our cheerful songs would oftener be,
‘ Hear what the Lord hath done for me.’ ”

Is not this true, my beloved friend? Yet our tenderest sympathy is due to such poor sufferers; and we, who know the heart's bitterness, must extend it: only let us

strive to urge upon the distressed to seek the Comforter in simplicity,—this is the sweet way to the balm of Covenant Love.

I rejoice that the error respecting Christ's human nature does not spread. I trust it will not;—we know that Jesus will keep His own cause, and we need not be anxious.

I am come to the end of my paper, and have not said half; but I trust to write again soon. *Pray write to me*, and tell me all your present plans, and situation, and give my very affectionate love to your dear sisters. I hope T—— is better;—may the Lord prosper her in soul and body! All here unite in true love; and to Mr. ——, say, Miss —— is gone to her rest. She lingered long, and departed about three weeks since in *holy cheerful joy in Christ*. Mr. C—— saw her continually. We hope that this dispensation will be blest to her afflicted family. Farewell, my beloved friend; ever believe me your faithfully attached sister and friend in the sweetest bond,

M. S.

CXC.

Errors—Security—Family Afflictions—Freedom from Divisions—Feeble things.

You must begin to suspect, my beloved friend, that I have wholly lost sight of that dear bond in Jesus, which I trust will ever be acknowledged as the evidence of our present and eternal union. But I do not allow myself to suppose that you will admit the thought, after my pen assures you, that I have you continually

in my remembrance, in the same spirit as that which existed when we parted. I had, in fact, taken out your last letter, for the purpose of answering the many interesting points of enquiry it contained respecting my opinion on them; and laid it open on my desk: unhappily, however, an accident happened which set *fire to it*, and deprived me at once of the contents; and for that time I put off writing, being grieved that I could not do it satisfactorily. Many things have continually occurred since that day, which have pressed me with engagements, accompanied with a state of extreme debility, till hearing that you were not now residing in your usual place, I felt another difficulty. I happened to express this in the presence of Miss ——, who immediately replied, that she thought she could assist me; and, according to the direction furnished by her, I now venture my letter, asking you, if it safely reaches its appointment, to favour me with a reply, and to tell me how you are circumstanced in the Lord, and what is the prospect of usefulness around you. In this day of increasing error, it becomes in proportion increasingly desirable, that they who hold one living Head and cleave to the faith once delivered to the saints, should cleave also unto each other, that Satan may not get advantage against the true church, by the depression of love and zeal.

It becomes awfully manifest, my beloved friend, that the power of darkness is desperate, and making those furious attempts which mark the last times, and prove him to be conscious that he has but a short time; and I think it will be clear to us, that the chief peril against which the Lord's people have to prepare, and be on their watch, is that which proceeds from *seducing spirits*, and the fatal delusion that accompanies the departure from sound doctrine? I conclude it most probable,

CXCI.

All-sufficient Companion—Forerunning Signs—Errors—Advent.

IT gave me unfeigned pleasure, my beloved friend, to receive and read your welcome letter, to which I have referred more than once, and from which I have also drawn refreshment of spirit. O it is sweet and precious to the soul, when opened streams flow to us in the desert; and every day's experience of the uncertainty which attends our human enjoyments renders us more susceptible of the blessedness of such as are divine. Thanks be to our Lord, that He is pleased to impart Himself through these channels which His love has consecrated, and that in so doing He makes us to understand something of the union that will be perfected in the eternal world.

May the Lord bless your present labours, my beloved friend! I rejoice that there is an opening round your dwelling for scattering the seed, and I beseech the Lord to give an abundant harvest, and to support you all under the burden and heat of the day. One smile from Him is sufficient to ensure this accompaniment, and whilst working under the light of His uplifted countenance we possess sure comfort, whatever may be the nature of attendant trials. Indeed our trials become most precious parts of the lot we receive, because they tend to produce in us this requisite simplicity, and bring us into intimacy with Jesus, as an all-sufficient companion and friend. Were it not for these things, we should lose many a dear manifestation and many an experience of wrestling nearness to our Lord, which faith makes us count it a *privilege* to possess. Our most sacred moments, I believe, are possessed when

the Lord, by His own dispensation of love, allures us into the wilderness, that He may there speak comfortably unto us ; and from thence He gives us our vineyards, blessing us with rich fruit both from Himself and in our own increase. In the final rest, we shall give Him highest songs of praise for this His unspeakable grace ; and now, in the wilderness we can sing and strike our harps to the name of our Emmanuel, even when the night is dark and gathering clouds appear. We, my friend, can also see the glorious bow in the cloud, and storms do not dismay the soul that can apprehend a Lord whose voice can still their swelling and ensure our safety. Whether, therefore, an affliction be of a more private or of a public character, let us rest in this possession, for all is well where Jesus is ! In respect of those clouds which overhang the kingdoms of this world, we know that they bring the glorious Saviour near. Convulsions which shake the earth are the forerunning signs of His approach ; and now that they rapidly multiply upon us, our hearts should glow with corresponding expectation. Awful as the conflict is to be, the result of glory to Christ and His people is sure ; and we, therefore, are called upon to mingle joyful desire with our solemn awe, as our Lord exhorts, “ Then lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh ! ” There is something affectingly arresting in the visible fulfilment of prophecy on which we look on every side. Surely we may say our Lord is accomplishing the testimony, that “ a short work will He make of it ; ” and we may well be roused to look to our lamps and to keep the eye of faith open, so that when the bridegroom comes we may not be found slumbering or sleeping. To my own mind the frightful burst of the prophetic earthquake on the continent which appears to give forth the token, that respects the struggle of infidelity for

dominion, is not half so appalling as that which we contemplate in the bosom of the professing church. Troubles arising from the professed family of Christ are assuredly the most affecting; but *these* are also the tokens of our Lord's approach; we must not, therefore, be cast down or agitated by such occurrences. Were not the evils which we are told will then appear of an imposing and desperate nature, they would not answer to the words of warning spoken by our Lord; so far, therefore, from being startled by the imposing form in which the trials are approaching amongst us, this very circumstance gives them their peculiar stamp, and to the spiritually discerning affords considerations which are full of instruction and peace.

Perhaps, my beloved friend, you have had communication with your correspondents in E—, so as to be satisfactorily acquainted with what is passing in the place where the high pretension of gifts, &c., has been and is located. I speak of it, my friend, according to my own apprehension of the thing. To me it appears a fulfilment of the word by which we are told, that from the midst of ourselves there would arise false prophets, &c., and that these should do many *signs and wonders*. Since the second advent is to be ushered in and attended with many glorious works by the Holy Ghost, and since these days are to be marked by the outpouring of *spiritual* visitation from the *Spirit*, it is not surprising that Satan should endeavour to impose a mock work upon men in which he would produce a close imitation of the Spirit's operation. When I see this attempt, therefore, I am led to believe it a subtle machination of the evil one. It belongs, as you perceive, my dear friend, to those who have in the first place departed from the simplicity of *sound doctrine*, who have also been unsettled and wavering from time

to time respecting what they would hold, and in whom there is, generally speaking, an *instability* of views. The *end* for which these gifts are professedly used is not according to the scripture rule. Gifts and tongues were originally bestowed for the *edification* of the souls of the ignorant; supplying the ministers or witnesses of the gospel with an ability supernaturally imparted, to speak to the sinners of various nations and tongues. It was not a gift for the mere distinction of one member above another; and even when possessed was *not* to be exercised unless there were an interpreter present—a means by which edification should be secured. Now in the present instance there is no intelligence, no meaning, no use attached to the sounds that issue from the speaker. A heated enthusiasm does indeed attend the assemblies, such as we might expect where natural passions are thus wrought upon by the enemy; but no effect follows, such as *God* keeps in view in all His operations. Neither is the gospel now given to men in a dispensation like that of the first days, when it had to contend with the earth in its *infant* state. It is more suitable to the present period that the Holy Ghost should work in his invincible invisible power upon men, *without* such signs, as confirmatory of a gospel already received in the world, and *now* to be glorified by its visibly triumphant power, in the consciences of some, by the *word*. It is true that Joel's prophecy is to be fulfilled, as it was on Pentecost, correspondently with the times which will present the Lord in His glory. There is no *mention* of the *gift of tongues* in that prophecy; it formed one part of the Spirit's operation, *for that first* dropping of the shower, because suitable to that day;—it *may* be so again in the final scene to which we are looking, *if thus suitable*, for the souls of strangers and gentile sinners to under-

stand the word spoken. But the present pretension has neither the evidence of the Spirit's work, nor is there a call or a result such as is to justify our confidence in it as of the Lord.

Let us also observe, as I do from your quotation, and from others also, how Satan has contrived to mix up this appearance with the subject of the *Personal reign*, &c., evidently to bring this question into disrepute or suspicion, and to make men afraid of the investigation. In short, it seems to me to be a most malicious and subtle effort of the power of darkness to undermine the zealous efforts of the true witnesses to give courage to suffer, and to prepare the way for the impositions of the papacy, from which quarter we may expect higher pretensions and boastings of *miraculous* gifts than even these that misguided Protestants may pretend. After all, let us, my beloved friend, look simply to Jesus' precious counsel, "Go not after them"—"Believe them not;" and keeping close to the bosom of our Shepherd, listen implicitly to His faithful voice, calling no man Master on earth.

These things will lead to purify the true church, and to make the doctrines of the Cross more and more precious to the simple-minded. Let us also, as *females*, be on our guard. Woman is undeniably to be exalted in the last dispensation accordant with paradisaical privileges. But let us take heed lest under this notion we be exalted above measure. Do you not notice what is said, "*leading captive silly women?*" &c., and do we not see in this instance how *women* are captivated and deluded, and hot in zeal in their opinions; *like Eve* seeking to know, and so departing from humility and simplicity? May God keep us, my dear, my precious friend, and teach us how to receive *our* restitution, and how to use it to His glory.

I am sorry my paper is filled, for I seem not to have said half I would. Give my true love to your dear sisters, and kindest remembrances to Mr. ——, in which we all unite. I am in arrears at present; my sister has been on the border of eternity, and *is now* in a very doubtful state, only considered freed from immediate symptoms of departure last evening, when by God's blessing a turn took place; but she is still in bed, and very ill;—all else as usual, and in all our covenant God is with us! This cheers us in the hour of affliction,—weak too in ourselves. The Lord bless and fold you to His bosom for ever;—let us meet in spirit and prayer for each other, and rejoice in our God, He never will leave us.

I am always yours, my beloved friend, in the most affectionate bonds,

M. S.

Look over mistakes;—I am called hastily away to give some medicine to my sister.

CXII.

Domestic Occurrence—Doctrine—Death—1831.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

WITH many affectionate and sympathizing thoughts I have borne you in my mind and heart during this long silence, which on account of many circumstances has been prolonged in a way that I regret; for truly I value your communications, and earnestly desire that we may ever maintain the blessed bond, which is increasingly precious as we realize around us the painful fact that even amongst such as call on the name of Jesus there

is a terrible distraction in sentiments and views. To be kept in the *unity of the faith* is a blessed privilege, which endears the everlasting Author of our eternal life, and makes us feel, with powerful application, the value of those revelations which teach us where our safety is, and how it is applied in a covenant that is sealed in Jesus. We have had much sickness, my dear friend, in our family from time to time since I last wrote to you, and are at this moment suffering under the visitation. Yet great mercy has been displayed in all the painful hours, whether encumbered by individual pain or by that of witnessing it in others; and I mention it chiefly for the purpose of telling you that this, along with much labour in the flock, and some increase of occupation providentially brought upon us by the arrival of four motherless little children from India to our care (the children of our departed niece M—,) may account for my not having much time or opportunity for writing. Now truly we may see that the works in which we are to engage are such as our heavenly Father hath before ordained that we should walk in; many of them quite unanticipated by us as to their *kind*, and possibly such as we should not have chosen, had it been left to us to decide; but we will rejoice in feeling how welcome the will of the Lord is made, whatever it may be, and that He has given us a heart to say that it is dearer to us than any dictates of nature. When considering this as an acceptable testimony to our own souls of the integrity with which we call Him Lord, it renders the dispensations themselves valuable and amongst our best privileges. How good, how gracious is the Lord, thus to give us exactly what both develops and strengthens His own work within us? and how happy it is for us to be under His eye, and led by His mind.

I doubt not you feel along with me, that the events around us, and the spirit existing in the professing church, are helps to our simplicity. We cannot have our eyes closed to the tokens that ask our attention, and that forewarn us of the coming of that final controversy, wherein the fire of the Lord's jealousy will consume His enemies and burn up the chaff, whilst it also will try and purify those of His people who have been corrupted from their simplicity or are degenerated from their true standard. The expectation is full of awful and solemn accompaniment; but since we know whom we have believed, and are by grace enlisted under His banner, we do not fear. We have only to ask that in His tenderness and truth He will keep us from all mixtures and evils that might displease Him; and resting upon His ever-faithful promise, we are sure that we shall be hid in it and abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

The opinions to which you refer in your last are not new, my dear friend; as you are aware, they evidently belong to an antinomian reception and use of doctrines, which, in their *legitimate* character and application, are according to holiness. True it is, as we experimentally know, that in the regenerate there remaineth a law that wars against the law of the mind. True also it is that the flesh is not, and cannot be subject to this law of God—it remains *flesh*, and at enmity against the Spirit. Consequently we are conscious of having within us two principles—but these principles are not (as it would seem the persons who argue as you state would represent) two distinct *governments*, as it were, each holding a respective court and reigning in their own domain, untroubled and *unconflicting*. A *warfare* is unquestionably produced in the regenerate, constituting the manifest difference between mere *illumination* and con-

version ; and in this warfare the *Spirit* is *troubled* by the movements of the flesh, causing the cry—" O wretched man that *I am*,"—and the flesh is *crucified* by the energetic Spirit, so that its fearful efforts against the new man are *impotent*, though painful. It is true indeed that sometimes this impotency is not so manifest as it ought to be, but it is because the believer relaxes from his *dependance*, and therefore is punished by a retributive kind of correction.

To answer against the exhortation, "to pray," &c., that "the believer prays always," &c. &c., savours of this spirit of *independence*, and cannot accord with the life of faith, which, properly understood, is a life of dependant expectation in the use of means. Alas ! it was the sin of Adam that he *lost* the energy of loving, dependent affiance, and would try to live independently ; it is still the fatal tendency of man, although variously expressed ; and therefore it appears from the whole of revelation, that the great design of God in the new creation is to restore the creature to this his proper existence ; and the more we advance in genuine experience so much the more shall we learn that the existence we have from this Spirit is maintained and advanced *through* the *use* of His supernatural energies, "stirred up," as the Scripture expresses it—*not neglected, watching unto* its developement and expression. Whenever we hear and see this kind of unfeeling and unsound mode of treating upon the subject, displayed by persons such as we now refer to, I think it is left without doubt that they are in an awful snare, and bear the marks of those described by Jude, who " feast without fear." But in these perilous times we are to look for *every* species of degeneracy and corruption ; and whilst we lament the evil, it turns for a testimony to such as walk by the light of the word, and remember the warning

voice that the Spirit there gives forth. May He, my dear friend, pour upon you every enriching operation of grace, and render you a steady burning light, that whatsoever may arise to trouble or to try you, the glory of the Lord may shine brightly in and by you! Let us not fear any assault; let us not be shaken by any convulsion that affects the outward church; the Rock can never be moved, neither can the superstructure, and as living stones in that building, we shall triumph above every storm.

We have had some very affecting scenes amongst us in respect of sicknesses and deaths. You will probably remember Mrs. ——; she was struck just as she entered church last Sunday week, and carried home, remaining entirely insensible excepting the day she died, which was Sunday last; when, in the course of the day, between delirium and, we will trust, true and gracious feeling, she asked for some bread and wine, and taking it in her hand solemnly repeated the words of the sacrament, "The body," &c. and "the blood;" before or after this she never spoke, from the time of the first stroke. She had evinced of late very growing affections towards the Lord. I trust she is now in His presence in peace. Give my affectionate remembrance to all your dear ones, in which all here unite, and write to me whenever your heart shall dictate it; although I am so much engaged as not to answer so frequently as I would. Farewell, my beloved friend; I am ever yours in the love and bonds of Jesus.

M. S.

CXCIII.

Conflicting Differences—Faithful Witnesses—Captain of Salvation—Preciousness of Promises—Cholera delayed.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

I SINCERELY thank you for the little note which was delivered to me after Mrs. —— had left H——. I regret that I could not therefore send any reply either by message or line. We were at Redcar at the time when our friend returned—the state of my own health and that of Maria requiring some little cessation—and just in the period of our absence Mrs. —— was here and gone. I know however that you will affectionately welcome a messenger by post; and I am as affectionately desirous to communicate with you, my dear friend. May I also ask if a letter from me reached you which I wrote in answer to yours, and which you do not mention in this note. I did not feel very decided in the manner in which it should be directed, and I sent it under cover to ——, as you once desired me. I mention this chiefly because I would not seem to be forgetful of you, and you might suspect me of this, if my answer never found its rest with you. We have need to cherish the sacred bonds which unite the children of God in *this* day; especially when, even in the midst of profession, the hand of brother is raised against brother, and when we find it difficult to say who are thinking and building alike. And surely we may consider it as an endearing motive for love and sympathy, when we find ourselves equally kept and upheld in this our blessed way, and hope of salvation! Let us bless our Lord for this act of His covenant grace in us, and receive the experience of the stability of our souls as a

pledge of future and assured increase. It is indeed lamentable, when the cause of truth is exposed to the enemy through the variableness and vanity of its professed friends ; for truth must always be one ; and believers should strive to demonstrate this to gainsayers. Now, however, is the time when the interests of the Lord's kingdom are assailed by the subtleties prophesied of in the word, and when we are called to redoubled energies in raising the pure standard before men. O may we, my beloved friend, be empowered to do this in life and doctrine, and be numbered with the *faithful witnesses!* In our own kingdom we have reason to believe that the *true church* is increasingly purified by the many afflictive circumstances which surround her, and that the heretical opinions that attracted so much attention have been very much lessened and checked ; although there remains a party or sect obstinately adhering to all the excesses which have attended this evil. We, my friend, may rejoice at such an escape, and mourn for such as are yet infatuated ; but in every exercise, we have the consolation, from which nothing can separate souls that are simple and satisfied in the divine government and rule. It is not for us, as christians, to look on with indifference whilst others are contending, and the battle is hot in the field ; but we may equally say, it is not for us, as christians, to look on with alarm when the battle is the Lord's and conquest waits upon His way. We know Him to be the Captain of *salvation*, and we see Him in every generation riding forth, conquering and to conquer. Whatever therefore may be the gloom which sometimes covers the scene, we are assured that it must ere long be dispersed by the breaking forth of the glory of the Lord from the midst, for *His way* is in the clouds. They therefore cannot harm His people.

The circumstances by which you are surrounded must greatly endear to you the strong consolation which is provided for saints in the eternal covenant ; and I doubt not you, my beloved friend, are at this time extracting a sweetness from the revelation, that imparts the glory and exaltation of Christ, which is in proportion to the bitterness of the winds that blow. We never have such powerful views of the Divine purpose as when we are thrown upon it for *all* our confidence and stay ; just as we also find that we never know the preciousness of a promise in its proper extent, until we are *placed in* the situation to which the promise is particularly addressed. May we not say therefore that all the events, which are gathering so rapidly upon us, evidently belong to an arrangement in which the everlasting God has consulted for the more splendid and blissful display of the coming and glory of our King ? Thoughts such as these animate our hearts and bid us take down our harps, even whilst we may seem to be in Babylon ; for there are pure streams of holy joy and peace that reach us wherever we dwell, and by which we can sing Emmanuel's praise.

We have been much refreshed this H—— season by many dear visitors from Ireland, with whom my soul has held sweet communion. It is delightful thus to realize how truly the saints are animated by one spirit, and have their peculiar fellowship in one living Head. The ravages which the Cholera has been permitted to effect in our land have caused many to quit their own homes and hasten to, and tarry long at H—— ; consequently the place is very full, and persons of various descriptions come to our means of grace. It becomes a subject of increasing interest that those poor souls may receive some blessing, standing as we all do so manifestly on the brink of eternity, and with the probability, should this disease hurry the soul away, that very little

time or power for serious considerations of the coming scene will be found. It is an awful visitation, and fearful is the condition of such as refuse to hear so loud, so affecting a voice. The deaths in York and Leeds have been numerous, and the disease still prevails there. Hitherto the Lord has not given such a commission to this town; may He in mercy hear the humble appeal that is made to Him from His people! We have a meeting every Thursday evening in the church, for prayer on this subject, and I hope it is blessed to many. Believe me, in the truest bonds of love, ever

Yours most affectionately,

M. S.

CXCIV.

Return of Cholera—Confidence in the Lord—Rest of Peace—Benefit of Communion of Saints—Care of languishing Plants—Redemption.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

As the prospect is before us of the departure of our dear friend from this place, I take the opportunity for conveying the expression of my affection, and for telling you how welcome your sweet letters are, conveying to me as they do the tidings most cheering to a pilgrim's heart; to know that Jesus is with us quite through this state of probation is our dearest joy, and the witness of this privilege which we are enabled to give to each other seems to animate our tributes. O, my friend, evermore may we thus celebrate his praises, who is our shade upon our right hand and left, and under whose sheltering wing we grow in the *experience* of our security and peace.

I have had my thoughts with you in this best of sym-

pathies during the return of the Lord's voice in the pestilence ; He will be with you assuredly ; these tokens of His continued controversy have a sacred message to his own—we say, “ His hand is stretched out still,” and we know not when He shall say, “ it is enough ; ” but we love the visible hand, and in whatever way it may act we can bless Him as retaining His eternal character of *love* ! Should it be His will, by this dispensation, to bid our bodies drop, O how rapidly shall we be borne through the conflict with the last enemy, and how speedily bask in the fulness of the presence of our God !

The more frequently I look upon this mode of fulfilling the sentence of death upon the body, so much the more it seems stripped of what in the first tidings appeared to be terrible ; and your little account of dear — has given confirmation to these feelings of liberty. May the liberating Holy Ghost impart the same experience to all the saints—and in mighty power give also the liberty so needful to poor sinners ! O how happy is it for us that we have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness ere that eventful moment comes, and how blessed are we who are privileged to know that our hour of departure is an hour of emphatic *rest* !

Already, my friend, we have *entered* this rest so far as the apprehending of Jesus is the gift of peace, and we find our Canaan where we gather rich bunches of grapes, and honey out of the rock, although we have still the sound of the enemy around and the necessity for warfare. Let us remember, whilst thus referring to the history and type, that we are not to spare the native inhabitants of the land ; whenever we do so they are pricks in our eyes and thorns in our sides wounding the heart and impairing the spiritual vision. But our high experience of fellowship with Christ can only be main-

tained in daily crucifixion ; and happier is it thus to die daily than to live in the indulgence of the flesh ; and thanks be to our God that we prefer the suffering path and the self-denial of the disciples of Jesus to every thing that earth can propose.

It is good for us sometimes to speak out these feelings and affections ; by this our embodied thoughts appear before us in a more manifest form, and we are helped in realizing the wonderful effect of divine power in our soul. For surely, my friend, the Lord hath wrought marvellously in bringing every thought into His dear captivity ; and when we understand what we are in nature, and feel what we are made in grace, we possess an undeniable witness of faith that must give glory to our God. Perhaps this is one great end of the Lord's appointing the communion of saints ? We are hereby led out to *speak* of his ways, and we thus strengthen others, and *also* obtain *clearer* views of our own salvation in the Lord ! I think *we* have found it thus in our precious fellowship, and may well acknowledge the Lord's mercy in bringing us into communion.

I have had some very refreshing and blessed hours with our sweet friend ; we have sate under the shadow of our Beloved, and have gathered the fruit of his wondrous love. I have found her deeply exercised, and with affections that, I trust, are ordained to a high and sacred devotion here and for ever, and I hope that the interchange of our thoughts has been a comfort and establishment to her soul. I mention this because you, my dear friend, are so tenderly concerned for her, and will rejoice that the Lord has been with us ; it appears to me that she requires great tenderness along with faithfulness, and that her dear soul languishes only as a precious plant that needs the full beams of the sun. The Lord has some of his plants peculiarly so consti-

tuted, and to whom no suitable deliverance can be given but in the display of divine love ; but, in fact, we all more or less experience that it is the manifestation of God's love to ourselves that is the effectual dispensation which settles and establishes the life of faith in all its comprehensive parts ; so that if we would possess *liberty*, and break the bands of earth and unbelief by which we are held in distance from the mark, it must be through powerful views of divine love given forth to us in the Lord Christ. Is it not so with you, my friend, and does not the love of Christ constrain you ? O yes ! when persuaded of this matchless act of grace, every affection of the heart is made to bring its own offering of devoted service and praise.

I listen with inward joy to every account given me of your dear parent—the marvellous work of grace must needs be to you a source of perpetual delight, and to all who hear it is a demonstration of power and grace rich in glory to the Lord and relatively animating. Let us walk dependently and joyfully in our God, for whilst leaning upon him we cannot fall. Give my tender love to your beloved mother ; we soon shall meet in the day above, and together tell of the *redemption* ! O comprehensive word ! expressive of the recovery of all we can desire. The Lord bless you evermore. Believe me yours in truest love,

M. S.

CXCV.

Judgments—Commission of Cholera general—False Doctrine—Convincing Arguments.

I HAVE at this moment, my beloved friend, a sweet occasion in which I may obey the dictates of my heart,

and hold communion with you. This is a delightful engagement to me; and had I not such increasing engagements around me, I should more frequently enjoy it. We, however, my dear friend, have our commission from above, and receive the daily appointment of occupation *as* the Lord will; and when he fills our hands, we are content with what is given. There is also a blessing in the very circumstance of having the power of expressing our fellowship of spirit restrained whilst on earth; for it seems to quicken our anticipation of a home wherein we shall meet in one blessed family, and possess an enlargement of powers answerable to our perfected desires. O how inconceivable is the excellency of the existence to which we are reserved, yet not wholly unknown; for blessed be the Holy Spirit who has revealed in measure to us that which the natural mind cannot comprehend. May we ever be receiving out of his divine testimony the enlargement of our possessions; and O may He pour them into capacities enlarged also by new-creating grace!

Very precious is the letter you kindly sent me by —; all its contents came with a sacred and refreshing influence upon my soul. To hear of the loving protection extended to you and my other dear friends during the visitations that were so awfully dispensing God's judgments near you, and to read of the energy of faith with which you were all enabled to sprinkle your houses with the averting blood, is a delightful privilege! for thus we realize how *the* faith is the same in every age, and the testimony of Jesus fresh and available, even as when first given forth by the unwearyed Spirit. The history of holy triumph obtained by believers of old is not the record of *exhausted* mercies, but given forth to us as tokens of what still exists, and of what the feeblest in Jesus' flock shall still expe-

rience—blessed are we as subjects of this grace. O, my friend, what do we not owe him who has thus obtained a victory in us, and prevailed to bring into our resolutely resisting hearts such great salvation!

As it respects the cholera, we, you know, can see in *this* the hand of love; we do not therefore shrink from it in dismay, nor consider it in all cases a token of judgment. Were it to have its commission to us it would be but to hasten our bliss;—it is true by a *painful* method of discharge from the present scene, but with an acceptable result. Notwithstanding this assurance, however, we necessarily feel a kind of awful impression when contemplating its effects, and remembering what it is which has induced these humbling visitations upon man.

I am glad you mentioned how this trial had been sent, in some instances, upon the *saints*. I have read this from your letter to others. Some persons seem *unduly* to consider it as likely only to affect the depraved or the poor, and so put away the close application of the call to themselves to be ready. Thus refuges of lies are invented, and the uplifted hand of the Lord is not properly seen. How affecting are these perpetual evidences of the slowness of the heart to *believe* the Lord; whether he speaks in wrath or in mercy, unbelief blunts the power of the testimony. No doubt this arises very much from ignorance or forgetfulness of the true Refuge, and consequent terror of what calls for close self-investigation! for when we consider the provision of the High Rock of salvation, we are no longer reluctant to encounter a true view of the divine dispensation and government. Ours is an eagle's flight; the wings of faith and love bear us upwards, and we can alight upon the towering rock, look on the sun, and look down on the world and its convulsions! Or should we

be of more timid and fearful experience, still, my dear friend, the privilege of the *dove* is ours ; and betaking ourselves to the cleft of the rock, we there may hide ourselves in peace ! The Lord Jesus impart to us all the dispositions that will thus glorify His name, and help us to evidence that we have a victory and a peace that can only be found in Him.

Entirely, my beloved friend, my soul agrees with you upon the important subjects of discussion that have now so long agitated the minds of the professors. In respect of the doctrines proposed by the instruments of the disorder, we can, I trust, have but one opinion. Possibly when first embraced by them they saw not the extent of the evil to which they tended. I am willing to think this, from what I know of some of the ardent abettors of the heresy. But in all the instances wherein it has arisen or prevailed, so far as I know them it has been in characters either enthusiastic, speculative, self-confident or self-ignorant. That some of those who have the root of the matter in them are unhappily thus perverted, we may believe. It is true the Lord has said that the elect shall not be deceived. On this promise we hang, and believe it shall be fulfilled ; yet there is a precept *attached* to it, namely, "Go not after them." Our clear preservation, then, is in the use of the precept ; but if we deviate from this, temporary delusion seems permitted, according to Daniel, and as a just correction, (Dan. xi. 35.) We therefore learn to trust our Keeper in simplicity and peace, but to accept His counsel, and keep far away from the pit.

I cannot imagine any heresy more fatal than that which respects the human nature of our Lord, since it at once strikes at the foundation of the whole method of salvation, both as it respects the atonement, justification, and the Spirit's work. Of course they are driven

into another scheme and into innumerable other opinions subversive of chief articles of our faith—of all which no doubt you are aware. Finding that such a view of Christ could not hold good with such and such other points of belief; instead of questioning their premises, they have endeavoured to remove the difficulty by introducing a totally different scheme of salvation,—a scheme fraught with what you express—ignorance of the unchangeable divine *nature*, divine *law*, and original appointment for man. Thanks be to God that we receiving Christ as our second Adam, receive in Him the establishment of the law, the exhibition of the divine unchangeableness, and a manifestation of the glorious wisdom, love and power of God as revealed in sovereignty. But the fruits are sufficiently developed, and we may therefore take comfort in expecting that ere long it will come to nought, or be limited within the boundary of a sect or party. Take the thing as connected. First, a heresy proposed; then, a high pretension to gifts. The heresy, no doubt, is from the deceiver. The pretended gifts exhibited in *support* of the heresy must have the same origin. We cannot suppose that the Holy Spirit would put his seal to that which dishonours Christ, and would subvert the foundation. We are not, my beloved friend, to limit the Holy Ghost. No doubt He can in every age, if He will, impart the same powers that He once imparted. But he cannot be inconsistent with Himself; it must be as a witness or seal to the *same truth*. As to the gifts themselves which He bestows, these were given in the primitive church for the purpose of establishing a hitherto unknown gospel; and in Corinthians we are told these gifts are *not* for a sign to them that believe, but to them that believe not. The gospel is now an accepted revelation; it has been substantiated by miracles and gifts,

and sufficient evidence been given of its divine character. It now remains for men to yield to the evidence given, or to be condemned. To make it necessary now to have gifts, &c., is not to *exalt* the church, but to *put her back* to her first infancy, when she must have *signs*, &c. She is now in her more advanced age,—blessed as not seeing yet believing, and receiving the *invisible* operation and mighty efficacy of the Holy Ghost, to establish the spiritual kingdom *preached* without miracles. Besides this, God is not a God of confusion, but of order. The Holy Spirit does not work in order to *astonish* without *edifying* men. He commands, even in the first days, that if there were none to interpret, “tongues” should not be used, and carefully provides for the preservation of order, peace and harmony. All these are broken by the persons we refer to; and instead of the voice of the heavenly dove, we hear of an unintelligible jargon, spoken to confirm “a lie,” attended with a spirit unlike that of Jesus, productive of disorder in the congregation, opening the mouth of the infidel, and with presumptuous denunciation *on all*, without exception, who follow not with them. Surely this is not of God! Satan has assumed a form such as we are forewarned of. As an angel of light he deceives and corrupts from the simplicity of faith as he did Eve. As if wearied of his method of procedure, &c., he now changes his form, and *answerably to the prophetic voice*, which respects the last time, he practices with “all deceivableness,” and *as* Jesus describes in Matt. xxiv. 24. Let not these things surprise us; rather let us remember that if they were wanting in the present day, we should miss out of the catalogue one of the prominent marks of the season wherein we believe that we live, so that such events should turn to us for a testimony. Settled, established and strengthened by our God, we shall outlive

the storm, and joyfully continue to know “*whom* we have believed !”

The Lord be ever praised for keeping you and yours, especially for defending you from any bias through the feeling you have for —. “Know no man after the flesh,” my dear one! The Lord is your Master and Head; and faith is proved when it can penetrate through any means used by Him for our good, and rejecting the evil in the instrument, can discriminate and cleave to the *pure* good in Christ.

I have filled my paper without emptying my heart. I have much still to say; but you must turn to your own heart to speak for me.

Ever my beloved friend, &c.

M. S.

CXCVI.

Cholera—Election—Swaddling Bands—Eternal Punishment.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

THE circumstances in which we are placed here, at this period, will, I am sure, awaken in your affectionate heart a sympathy that has pain in it; yet you will know with us and for us the *joy* likewise that abounds in proportion to the measure of fellowship we have in the Lord—knowing likewise that the fellowship is never more abundantly granted than when tribulation is endured; this is enough to assure you that we are supported by the richest consolation, and made cheerful, although in the midst of clouds.

Our Lord is magnified in all his ways, and we are privileged to see His arm made bare with its usual

accompaniments of judgment *and* mercy. What the Lord may do in respect of our own domestic scenes it is not for us even to surmise; but we can be assured that life or death being ours, it will be in covenant love whether we live or die.

I am at present writing from my own sick-room, to which I have been confined nearly a fortnight, having had an attack which indicated the need of prompt measures. Two of our servants had the same, and one is still confined to her room. We are none of us wholly free from an affection which seems to accompany the visitation of Cholera; but we are sustained; and our beloved —— is an astonishment to every one. He is not well in body, but borne up in supernatural life with an energy of action and joy of soul that is manifestly shed forth for the day. Of course he cannot but feel his liability to be seized by the awful disease which he witnesses in all its forms, but is incessantly engaged either in the hospital or in private dwellings. Our hospital is the former work-house—the old inhabitants are removed into Park Row—and the other building is arranged for patients and regularly conducted with nurses, &c. &c., and medical attendance.

The first appearance of this visitation was on the Sunday evening that followed the week of the contested election, which we considered a grievous affair; and truly we look upon our present afflictive circumstances as in some degree sent as a rod of correction for this offence. May the Lord in pity sanctify the suffering and recover some poor sinners to Himself through the evil!

As yet we do not find any of our particular flock in the number of the afflicted—but it may be! There is *one event* to all, as it respects human scenes, although the difference be ever so fully marked in respect of its

accompaniments ; and we shall not be surprised if some of our dear ones in the Lord thus enter their rest. We have had some hundred of cases wherein symptoms have been very strong and suffering great, without the peculiar developement of all the features of the disease—about eighty cases wherein the positive condition has been endured, and I think thirty of these deaths.

Two of the latter were of a dreadfully suffering kind. The first case in the town was in Hilton Lane—the father and two children dying in two days. It then appeared in the Market Place, and now is chiefly at the Low Bridge, and especially in Blackburn's Yard, all round — dwelling. You will be much interested and affected as your thoughts pass through our streets, and you set before the eye of the mind the places so well known to your dear self. Hitherto Bond End has been unvisited, except in one case of —, and not violent. * * * In the town itself there is an activity and charity, and zeal *very, very* marked—affectionately solicitous—and every one, according to their power, busy in making collections of money and of clothes for the destitute, and little things in cooking for the poor distressed who, when recovering, need much care. The little children too are an affecting charge when parents are taken away.

I believe it has been considered, comparatively with York, Leeds, &c., that the Cholera with us has been of a mild character. But in all its forms it is affecting, because, generally speaking, the soul is hurried into eternity, often we may fear but ill prepared. Prayer seems to be acceptable, and a few words at a time to be understood, so that the visits are important. Very thankful shall I be, if strengthened once more, to go down and unite in the work; but the Lord's time and way is best, and I wait! Join us in prayer, my

friend. We had a day of prostration last week affectingly observed by all in the town.

My letter is nearly brought to a close, and I have said nothing of the contents of your last dear one to me. Very precious it was and is. And my soul abounds in gratitude to him by whom we are everlastingly united in one rock and in one *stable* hope. It is very grievous to see and hear so much of religious discussion wherein *novelty* of opinion seems to form a chief allurement to the minds of men, and yet more afflictive that some of the most exalted of the pleaders of the cause of truth do apparently wrap up the subjects so proposed in a mantle of false charity; thus giving, as it were, a kind of swaddling band wherein infant heresies are nursed! but these are all marks of our times, and we must not be offended when they appear. O may the eternal spirit ever maintain a band of vigorous advocates, and endow them with *wisdom* to discern where evil exists, and *judicious* zeal to know how best to meet the adversary!

You ask me to express my opinion on *three* points which interest your dear mind. At this moment I cannot reply to that which respects the letter on — funeral, not having seen the Record, and not having the power just now to obtain it, it may serve for another communication.

The subject of *eternal punishment* is perhaps the most important of the three. You and I do firmly believe the fact that they who depart from this world in a state of sin pass into a state of unchangeable condemnation; but it is well to be able to give a reason for this belief.

It is in the first place affirmed in simple words of revelation, according to what we read; if you will find the passages that now occur to my thoughts, I need not

write them at large, in Matthew xxv. 46, *the state* of which souls and bodies are inheritors is described, on either side, whether happy or miserable, as *everlasting*. In Jude verse 6, the condition of devils and fallen angels is described as setting forth that of condemned men, verses 7, 12, 13. 2 Pet. ii. 17. In Matthew xii. 31, 32, compared with Mark iii. 29, the consequence of rejecting the only Messiah is set forth as *eternal misery*, according to Heb. x. 26—29, and 2 Thess. i. 8, 9, Rev. xiv. 10, 11. I need not multiply references—surely these are enough to convince a *simple* mind that there is something more intended here than an eternity attached to *place*; the place is only mentioned as setting forth the nature of the woes that are there eternally endured. In the next place we should observe the procuring *cause* of condemnation which is transgression of *law*—then the unchangeableness of the *law-giver*—the abiding *authority* of the law as given—the nature of the penalty annexed to transgression which is *death* of body, the *second* death also consequent upon the soul's spiritual death in trespasses, and described as consisting of final banishment into hell, Rev. xx. 12—15, Jude verse 12.

In the next place let us ask on *what ground* a soul could be released? If it is answered, ‘for its measure of endurance; it is nothing else but the Romish purgatory. If it be said, ‘for *Jesus'* sake,’ this is but a darkening of the glory of the salvation of Christ, and an obscuring of the *covenant*. His blood is the *very* propitiation, His blood was given for the redemption of souls that they should *not go down* into the pit, His blood must *avail* for that for which it was shed, Rom. viii. 1. *This* life is the period of its *application*, “Now is the day of salvation,” *this* life is for the regeneration, without which none can enter into the kingdom. *How*

are the condemned to be born again? how made penitent and brought to honour the Son? how nurtured for glory? Surely hell is not the place, wherein the Holy Ghost operates to establish Jesus' kingdom!

Much more might be said, but I forbear; observing only, my beloved friend, that the opinion broached to you has been so before by men, and that it is revived in company with those other errors that mark our day, and belong to that idea of general redemption, as proposed by the party over whom we have oftentimes mourned. It is, however, derogatory to the person and work of Christ—dishonourable to the law and law-giver, and to the covenant—and dangerous to the souls of sinners—and also (were this to be revived) destructive to our joys; for if punishment be not eternal, neither can we be assured that the inheritance in the world of glory is an *everlasting* inheritance, as we believe it to be. God forbid that we should hearken to such seducing spirits. God grant we may be well built and compacted, and unmoved by the enemy. Let us read and rejoice in 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; v. 1, 2. 2 Tim. ii. 10, 19. Heb. ix. 12.

This letter is but half a letter in respect of the much I have to say; yet I will send it, as the sheet is full, for you will desire to hear. The Lord bless you, my ever dear friend, and keep your feet, as he has done, in peace and safety. Yours in dearest bonds,

M. S.

CXCVII.

Condolence and Sympathy—Congenial Communion—Cholera at Leeds—Persuasion of eternal Life—The Creature's Vanity.

MY VERY, VERY DEAR FRIEND,

YOUR welcome few lines put into my hand on Wednesday have quickened the affectionate purpose I have long had to tell you something of the feelings of my soul and of the sympathy of my heart towards you. * * * * I grieve to find that you are suffering in body, the ever-faithful presence of our own Lord will, I believe, sustain and refresh you ; yet the hours of pain are afflictive to the outward man, and if it be his will I ask Him in mercy to restore you to health. I know that you yield up your own desires in this and all other things to Him ; but as we are bid to pray and ask, it is not inconsistent with resignation to make use of this means of deliverance. But O how the spirit that is in us breaks forth beyond the thought of mere bodily deliverance. How ardently would it rather exchange this for the great deliverance by which the body will be put off for awhile, and its *burdensome* accompaniments be destroyed for ever. How inexpressibly precious, my dear friend, has been the refreshing fellowship granted us together this year. I cannot fully tell you how much the holy savour is left upon my soul. I look back to the hours in which we sat together beneath the shadow of his wing with grateful delight, and must testify as you also will, that our Lord was very gracious in affording us not only opportunities but hearts to appreciate them and subjects by which to be refreshed—all is from him, and this consideration endears the sacred enjoyment to us both ; perhaps we may never meet again

in this world, our minds seem to have a congenial influence and preparation upon this subject, perhaps arising out of the realizing views we have of the rapidity with which the Lord appears to be carrying on his work, and the encompassing tokens of his presence in that visitation which takes so many away from these transitory scenes. In Leeds the cholera has been so alarming that a person told me, ‘few people seem to have any care or concern for providing for *to-morrow*, so uncertain do all feel of remaining here.’ But is it not an awful fact that although this feeling occasions a sort of seriousness, it does not appear to awaken a suitable solicitude for the future state of the soul. How clearly do these things establish the doctrines of human apostacy and ignorance, and of the sovereignty of invincible grace in all the vessels of mercy; we may, therefore, fall prostrate before our God in wondering admiration of the power that has reached us, and in the grateful consciousness of our dependence upon the Lord for our life; dear and blessed be his beloved name in our hearts! O may we love him more and more, whilst we rejoice also in the fearlessness which faith and love generate within us. Thanks be to our Lord we are privileged to look on human miseries and future awful realities with *rest* of soul, and in proportion to our power to say, ‘my beloved is mine, and I am his,’ we are delivered from evil. In your bosom, my dear friend, this persuasion lives, you have the eternal life. Sometimes also you speak and write as *knowing* that you have it. I do not much attend to the *sometimes* in which your poor precious soul is harassed by the enemy, because it is quite evident these are *assaults*, and, perhaps, on some occasions obtaining more of passing advantage than they otherwise would, because the startled mind stands still as it were to parley with and so takes fright at the foe. But

after all you always find yourself either impelled by the spirit within to hasten to the place of refuge, or mightily drawn by the strong arm of redeeming love closer to the bosom of covenant affection, where the very sense of impotency is rendered instrumental to good by increasing simplicity. * * * *

Alas! what is man! But let us turn from man, we have enough in God, and the painful occurrences which fix upon our hearts the experience that the creature is vanity, work for good, and are to be numbered with most salutary and sanctifying dispensations. The Lord bless you, my ever dear friend, and bind us together in his blood and by his Spirit, and cover us with our splendid robe. Farewell, may Jesus bless you ever, is the tender prayer of my heart. I am ever your's in the dearest bonds,

M. S.

CXCVIII.

Unsatisfactory Region—The Reverse—Habitual Walk—Salutary Elevation—Deviations into worldly Amusement to be avoided.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

Do not think that I am unmindful of you because I am slow in answering your letter. I think of you every day, and my spirit is much with you in the various scenes which necessarily lead you into paths which have long been untrodden by you; for much as we admit the power of natural affection and natural claims, there must ever be a great degree of painful exercise to the spiritual mind whilst living in a region where so little of the work of the Spirit is seen or felt; but, I trust, it will all concur together for good, and render your own pastures still more dear when you return to feed again

with the dear little flock. How little is there in this life that can yield any satisfaction independently of this provision—and how vain is every purposed source of enjoyment if God be not there!

I am sure we feel it so with increased demonstration, and I bless the Lord who thus continues to operate in such a way as tends to the establishment and peace of the soul in Him. May we ever thus rest upon His bosom for our home, our heaven, and our world; and never may a sigh or wish wander from this sacred and all-satisfying region!

We are going on here just as when you left us, so that on your return you will find the same interests and the same affectionate hearts to welcome you back. * * I believe that the life of faith is very much advanced, and to be displayed in those *little* concerns, as we call them, which belong to our daily and habitual walk, and that often more real holiness is in exercise under these comparatively undervalued occasions than in the greater trials of life. Certainly we are sensible of strong movements passing in the breast on such occasions; which, if not under regulation, would lead us into sad inconsistency either of despondency or of resentment; and we should do well to consider that the life of Jesus is to be exhibited in us and by us, in the meekness of well-disciplined and unmoved passions. I feel that this is the increasing experience of my own breast; and to preserve the kingdom of Jesus in ardour within the heart it is indeed requisite to *live* in prayer, and to labour after a mind elevated above the things of this tempestuous world. It is in the *high mountains* of Israel that we breathe freely, and commune in peace with our Lord.

Perhaps these observations, dropping as they do from my heart through my pen, will best answer your ques-

tion upon the subject of Vauxhall. I know that it is a kind of pleasure such as many consider to be a sort of half-way enjoyment, not wholly condemnable although not spiritual. Certainly we may suppose that some of the evils visible in many places of dissipation may be wanting in this—its *character* is somewhat different; but what I remember of the scenes I witnessed there, leave no favourable impression upon my mind. I was in those walks at a time of deepest mental agony, and walked there without much of interest excepting what belonged to the dark walks, where a degree of silence and gloom prevailed which well accorded with my bosom feeling of desolation. But in the other walks there was no sound but of noisy mirth or vain utterance excited and increased by music, &c. And, I think, it is to be ranked amongst the all things that are in the world *which are not of the Father*, and which therefore the children of such a Father had better abstain from.

Greatly shall I rejoice when you come back and are delivered from the difficulties which attend association with the unenlightened. But be not cast down, the Lord is with his child in every situation; only act with meek resolve, and you will possess an inward testimony from God that is better than a thousand worlds. It is painful to have to refuse kindnesses that are proffered with an evident desire to give pleasure; but this is part of our cross and gives proof that even our best feelings are subject to the control of the Lord's blessed appointment.

Our missionary sermon is to be preached next Sunday. The confirmation, I believe, is not until August, so that you may yet be present. The lectures are in consequence renewed, and the young people catechised by Mr. C——, in the national school. Farewell, my time is expended, and my call come to see a person,

who is now waiting. God bless you, ever and ever !
and ever believe me yours in the true and binding love
that unites us,

M. S.

CXCIX.

Faithful Efforts—Remedies for Difficulty in Prayer—Prospered Attempts.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

Is it not a great venture for you to set off after such an illness, and poorly as I hear you are ? I fear it will be too much for you, and will harass and overdo you. Do not go till you are stronger, and then I would not detain you. A great call of duty and mercy may thus be opened for you. O, my dear ——, shrink not from that faithfulness which Christ requires of his people. The illness of your sister will make it a more easy effort to speak to her on the state of her soul ; perhaps it is the Spirit who hath sent for you, that you may administer to her the word of life. If she recover, yet what a mercy may it be that this sickness, though not unto death, was for the glory of God ; and if she die, then, my dear girl, there seems a still greater necessity now to seek the conversion of her soul to God. At any rate let not her blood be upon your head ; whether prospered in the endeavour or not, it will return into your own bosom, and be a comfort to you that you made the trial.

As to any natural impediments which may present themselves to your mind, remember faith can remove mountains, and going forth in the strength of the Lord you will find yourself endued with sufficiency of power from Him. May God Almighty bless you and make you a

savour of life to others, and cherish you in his love yourself! My unfeigned prayers will be with you, and my faithful affection.

I like the tone of your letter though it is written in the spirit of a mourner. That your illness should excite you to a more serious purpose, and reveal more of the preciousness of Jesus, is a proof that it has been an affliction in love; and whenever we can ascertain this, affliction changes its nature and becomes prosperity and joy. Yet you sorrow that your heart is not so stayed upon the Lord in prayer as you wish, and ask me what would be the best means of prevention to this evil.

It is a trial which every child of God has to encounter more or less at one period of pilgrimage; and perhaps there is none that is more bitterly felt. It often happens, I think, that efforts only seem to prevent deliverance and to expose to still greater temptation. It appears to me that there is no remedy but that of endeavouring after getting the mind more imbued with spiritual things. Prayer and seasons of devotion generally partake much of *previous* frame, and the correction should not so much be directed to the *acts* as to the *preparation* of the heart. Continued study of the scriptures—frequent meditation upon eternal things—watchfulness against a wandering spirit during daily avocations; these things will gradually establish an internal state of spirituality, from which a more settled and near communion with God will flow. In the meantime, my beloved, patience and persevering purpose in waiting upon God will be necessary, and never yielding to those assaults of Satan by which he would shake us from constancy by making use of our distressing experience as a handle for his devices. Cast yourself, my dearest girl, with every weight of sin and misery, upon the bosom of that free and eternal love in Christ which can-

not fail you ; and doubt not but that your light shall spring up, and finally your triumphs be complete in Jesus Christ.

I have not time to enter upon any concerns of my own. I fear losing this conveyance ; but I have been better yesterday and this morning. Our school prospers to the utmost of our expectation. We had a Sabbath something like K——. The last we spent, Mr. C—— preached here morning and evening to a congregation most interesting and crowded, and I had my scholars in the afternoon. I hope the next will be similar. Think of us and pray for us. There is no place so dear to me in this world as K——. I feel it more and more, though I think I am more emptied of self-preferences. May God be pleased to crucify every thing, and win us wholly for Himself! I am sure He seems as if He would melt us down with beams of mercy and love, and constrain us by these loving means to be His. Great compassions and deliverances have been shewn to us lately. Sometime I hope we shall have opportunity to refresh each other by recounting the wonders of our God. Farewell, my ever dear friend, my faithful affection goes with you, and may the presence and grace of Jesus too, and bring you safe back again that we may meet again in His dear fold at home.

M. S.

CC.

Proofs of Faithfulness and Love—Transitory Fellowship in time—State of perverse Nature.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,
My heart's greeting will not be unwelcome to you, I am sure, and therefore I send it in this little note, be-

seeching the Lord that it may find you in peace, and that your return home will have been attended with the Lord's acknowledging smile. This, I trust, will be extended both to body and soul, and to your dear mother, so that you will know how the Lord overshadows his own in all their way. Blessed be his name, we do know this in all situations ; for he leaves not himself without witness of his loving-mercy, whether we go out or come in, whether we live or die. Our privilege has long been to walk in company with our dear Lord ; and we cannot have been so long with Him without having had long and blessed proof of His faithfulness and love. It is not for us, with such a privilege, ever to hesitate in the judgment we form of *any* of His dealings. In His hand trials are ever made to be blessings, and therefore we will always endeavour cheerfully to declare—“ He doeth all things well ! ”

It seems to me a long time since I had any letter from you ; perhaps you could not write when absent from home, but I know that the Lord maintaineth the bonds of His children, and that we must be in Him with abiding, holy fellowship.

Our summer season here, as it respects the claims of passing strangers, is now nearly closed. It often affects me as these periods successively return, as it helps me to mark the rapid advance of years, and fills my mind with thoughts of the many seen for a transitory hour or two here on earth, whom I may never meet again on this side eternity. Such reflections are useful, and bring my soul into converse with the Lord, and into supplication that when transitory days are past there may be a glorious company of blessed ones gathered out from those we love into the family that is above. How often you and I, my friend, have been allowed to meet, and hear, and write to and of each other since first your

feet were turned this way ; in this we will confess that the Lord has kindly dealt with us, and we will be cheered by knowing the strength of the arm on which we lean, for days to come. * * *

Alas ! too truly did you depict the state of — ; there are awful hindrances, and ties, and obstructions, to break which will require that supernatural strength which the Lord may give — , and we will pray the Lord to make it a mighty and effectual call ! How grievous are the snares and traps laid for souls—how sad the perverseness which will sacrifice all things for a dying worm and nothing for the Almighty Lord ! O, there is a fearful destitution in the sinner's soul of all that is good, and a tremendous indwelling of all that is evil. May the Lord Jesus triumphantly cast out the wicked one and obtain His own triumphs in his blood—bought to the exaltation of grace and holiness. For this also we may pray, for too well we know that the old man of the heart is not subject to the law of God, “ neither indeed can be ; ” but we have another law, blessed be the Lord, and this shall be the victory.

I bid you farewell, my beloved friend ; the Lord of all fulness bless you for ever !

With tenderest love I am yours in Jesus,

M. S.

CCI.

Purpose of the Lord's Appointments — Proof of the “ Needs be ” — Spiritual Egotism — The Creature used as an Instrument — Signs of the Times — Plain Privilege — Ingathering.

I HAVE been very long ere my pen has been taken up, my dear friend, in reply to your letter, sent me by Mrs.

—. You kindly said, at my *leisure* I might reply ; this, as you may be aware, is not what very frequently occurs with me, more especially at this season of the year when, in addition to the regular engagements at Knaresborough, I have what may arise from friends at H—. The leisure of sickness, however, is now appointed me, and I will not let the opportunity pass without seizing it.

It is a privilege to be placed occasionally in the sanctified retirement afforded in a chamber where we powerfully realize the sinkings of nature, especially when our usual calling entails much of relative work ; and as the Lord is pleased to visit His children with spiritual enrichment, by whatever means He chooses, we may believingly anticipate an enlargement of experience and enjoyment, even when outward channels are cut off. Happy is it when we can see His loving hand in every cross, and know that whatever He appoints is for the purpose of reducing self and exalting the Lord.

It is with these reflections that I have viewed the trial you passed through and the reference you still make to it in your last letter ; and it seems to me, my dear friend, that the very “*agony*” you speak of as being endured on that occasion gives proof of the “*needs be*” for the suffering. We do not usually suffer such strong emotion, but when a “*wrench*” of violence tears away what we have held in closest embrace ; and although it may be in itself a legitimate possession, we may conclude that our watchful Lord saw a danger and *therefore* took it away. We must find our all in Him ; and He will dispense to His own whatever shall most promote this simplicity. Ah, my friend, let us not be offended at His dispensations when they also bring to light hidden evils that we perhaps little suspected to be in our hearts. Notwithstanding our feeling of abase-

ment in His sight, and professed self-renunciation, it is possible that a vast degree of self-importance may remain ; and though not exactly assuming the visible forms of the Pharisee, yet concealing itself under the garb of simplicity, and hence we are tempted to think much of our own endurances, and to let a spiritual egotism (if I may so style it) betray us into evil. May God defend us from this ! I am very much afraid of it, lest the temptation of what *I* suffer, *I* do, *I* forego, *I* feel, be allowed to overrun the garden of the Lord as an evil weed. Surely, love, the less we think of self, excepting as in union with Jesus, and as lost in His sufferings and in His sufficiency, the better.

In reference to your experience, you will best know whether any such temptation be presented. But it is good to be on our guard, not only against outward assailants, but against the inward foe—our own evil and deceitful hearts. I know it is a grievous blow when our good is evil spoken of, and when our efforts for the Lord are stopped by the interference of others ; but all is well ; perhaps He who searches the heart and tries the reins sees either some evil or some danger of evil, and uses the creature, as his instrument, to effect a cure ; if so, we should forget the creature in Him by whose appointment the act was put forth, and then we have cheerfulness, gratitude and peace. May our God be our divine Teacher ! I have passed through floods of this description, and therefore speak, my dear friend, in this sympathy, and prayerfully desiring that we may have the image of our Lord progressively perfected in us, according to His own fore-ordinating will. Rom. viii. 29. In a very short time we shall appear before Him, and, seeing Him as He is, we shall be *like* Him. O how surely do we feel this hope to be of a constraining kind, so that we seek to purify ourselves, as it is writ-

ten, 1 John iii. 2, 3. The *times* are awfully indicative of a coming storm, but the storm will usher in the peaceful day, and our privilege remains plain before us to be hastening to the coming glory; and in contemplation of this, I trust we shall be enabled to pass over the dark clouds that lie between, whether of a national or private character. What a cheering of the heart arises out of this enlivening prospect! May we ever bear it in view, and the loving cry of our hearts rise, "Come quickly, Lord!"

Our work goes on in its usual form, and I hope also with the blessing of the power which the Lord alone bestows. We have interesting examples of his ingathering, both to the fold below and above. Some dear ones have been plucked as His lilies, to adorn His house on high, and some still grow in the garden here, shedding the sweetness of redeeming love around. For such abiding testimonies of the Lord's loving-kindness may heaven resound with praise, and may the church on earth utter a song; and blessed be His name that His own *shall be saved!* O this is my comfort for myself and for them I love—his sheep shall never perish!

I rejoice in the blessing that lights on your beloved parent. The dew of the Lord is all night upon the branch, and it is a lovely example of the divine love. She will ripen fast, my beloved friend, for her eternal home, and her bliss be perfected ere long.

I pray God to bless her and to bless you in her, and in all that is lodged in your heart with holy desire. I cannot write more, being fatigued, but you know all I would say. Farewell then, my dear friend, and believe me your truly affectionate friend in Jesus' love.

M. S.

CCII.

Afflictions and Consolations—One Desire—Shadow of Jesus' Wings.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

IT has been a grief to me that I should disappoint your affectionate hearts' expectation by our dear friend ——, but I hope you will feel and cherish the assurance of my steady fellowship and sympathy with you in all the painful and in all the joyous experience through which you pass. Great is the sorrow that accompanies the outward man; but I know that in the inward there is a manifestation which disperses clouds and ensures peace; therefore, my dear friend, we can say of such times of our Lord's appointing, "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing!" May your dear —— be under the consolation as she is under the affliction sent of God, and by these fearful demonstrations of divine power learn to appreciate *redeeming love*. Ah! it is indeed deeply affecting to the heart of one who knows by the divine teachings the nature both of God's power and love, when any, especially such as are nearly allied, are exposed to the one without an assured interest in the other. I can only join my prayers with yours that these holy attributes of the Lord may be united in a work of salvation to the poor sufferer, and that you may have the joy of beholding your near relative embraced in the arms of God's love and visited with Jesus' peace! Let your own Spirit, my love, be kept in dependence; we know that the Shepherd cannot lose one of his sheep, and that he frequently exercises the patience and faith of His people, by causing his special love to an individual to be long ere it be clearly developed; but we can trust him to do all things well, and to glorify himself by

every act. What is it we can desire beyond this simple truth that the Lord *will* magnify himself? Blessed be his name that he has gathered up our scattered thoughts and interests, and feelings, and has united them together in *one* desire, so that we can rest in the exercise of singleness of eye and devotedness of heart, and say, “Thy will be done!” I am persuaded I write what will be responded to in your bosom. Some passions may arise, and some painful sighs escape from our lips; nevertheless, the *rule* over us is Jesus’s will, and every emotion that would rebel we learn to war against with integrity—is it not so, my dear friend?

I have seen little indeed of our dear friend during her visit; indisposition of body has been a hindrance to some sweet engagements, especially the illness of my sister; but we have met in the school, and, I trust, have been together sitting underneath the shadow of Jesus’ wing!—covered by his wings we have also felt nurtured, and O how sweet it is to realize that we have such an *abiding* place of security. Ps. xci. 1. Never let us wander from thence, especially in this stormy day, when we are looking for clouds big with vast developements of the eternal kingdom; let us with corresponding energy realize our safety and rejoice in it. A few short words have passed with our dear friends, speaking our mutual hope in the coming of our Lord. O ’tis a cheering thought, though many terrors will attend it; He comes to reign in righteousness and to rescue His people. May we look for Him more than they that watch for the morning! Farewell, my beloved friend, the Lord bless you evermore, enriching you with *every* joy in Himself! Your affectionately attached,

M. S.

CCIII.

Sympathies of the Redeemed -- Encouragement to persevering Prayer -- Mercy and its Giver conjoined -- Separation -- Increasing Vigilance.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

WITH affectionate and grateful sympathy and praise to our God, my heart unites with yours on the account of your dear mother, of whom, not only by your letters but by the testimony of others, I have such joyful accounts. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, surely on earth there ought to be proportionable expression of exulting love; for although angels may be supposed to have higher modes of expression, none can be possessed of sympathies so strong upon the subject of redemption, as they who are *themselves redeemed*. It is in this spirit that I return thanks to God for the manifestation of his grace in this instance, and that you are cheered by the continued light that now shines from your dear parent as the dwelling-place of God. O may your soul be gladdened by the rapidly advancing kingdom of Jesus demonstrated in her soul!

What an encouragement is this to the exercise of patient faith, and what a rebuke to the listlessness and despondency of nature, under which perhaps in too many instances we are ready to sink if the Lord only seems to delay! Whilst we rejoice for the precious soul that has been so long the subject of your believing and wrestling desires, let us use the demonstration of God's goodness and power for the furtherance of our own hopes and joys. And if there be yet, as doubtless there will be, any whose eternal salvation is the subject of our anxious desire, let us be encouraged to persevere in bringing them before the mercy-seat in the arms of our faith.

more at large on the many interesting subjects which your letters have presented to my mind. We have been circumstanced alike, my dear friend, so far as the *sick room* is concerned, and we can therefore sympathize with each other: and O how precious is it to experience the presence of the Lord, not only with the nurse but with the afflicted! However, we are called to exercise the spirit of holy resignation to whatever may be the mind of our Lord. He will dispense His visits according to the wisdom and grace which is best in His counsels, and this must be according to His final glory. How great is the consolation derived from the precious doctrines of grace, when we are placed in those circumstances which demonstrate their excellency, and perhaps nothing does more forcibly lead to this end than an exercise of mind respecting the salvation of those whom we love. Here every natural feeling is called out into action, and it requires a triumphant power of the Spirit to raise us above the anxieties of such excitement; but all things shall work together for the advancement of spiritual energies, and therefore we will rejoice if even by painful means we are rendered more spiritual, and more decidedly separate from the principles of mere nature.

Perhaps these things may be very requisite, my dear girl, in your situation? The delight of finding a companion with whom you might every day hold sweet converse, might be dangerous to a heart so excessive in its affections; and I always think, when I am turning my mind upon your character and experience, that the Lord has manifestly appointed for you a kind of suffering most adapted to your own disposition. This seems strange; for when strong affections are possessed, and when they are also sanctified, we seem reasonably to expect that they might be gratified;—but then we

remember how they *can* meet full gratification in Him, in loving whom there can be no dangerous excess, and in association with whom there is always an ample recompense for every mortification we meet from the creature. Is it not so,—and may we not gratefully acknowledge that our Lord has shewn marvellous love to us in dispensing what has tended to settle us more decidedly in Himself? O may we ever delight our souls in Him, and in the fondness of devoted affection find full scope for every expression which it can dictate, in Jesus our soul's beloved! By contrasting His excellence and His conduct towards us with what we find ever in the kindest and best of human friends, His preciousness is greatly increased to our hearts; and every day will give us some opportunity; for every day proves to us that nothing can satisfy us but the smiles of our Lord,—“All our fresh springs are in him!” May we ever find them flowing forth to our thirsty appetite as streams from the smitten rock, and experience the sacred revival which they are designed to give to us all the desert through. Take my affectionate thanks for all your faithful remembrances. May every best comfort be shed into your soul is the affectionate prayer of your faithful friend,

M. S.

CCV.

Afflictions Channels of Divine Communications—Affections subjected to their rightful Lord.

It is not in my power, my beloved friend, to write to you such a letter as the affection of my heart would prompt, but I will not lose the opportunity of telling

you how continually I recal the blessed moments of spiritual communion we enjoyed when our Lord was pleased to bring us together ;—since we met we have been visited by much sickness in our house. * * * I tell you all this, that you may understand why I cannot take a large sheet of paper and fill it from my heart ; and I trust also that while you are reading this, your affectionate heart is filled with faith and love on our account. Very precious are these seasons. To me they have usually been made times of loving manifestation from our Lord ; and when my body is sick, my soul rests so sweetly on the breast of my beloved, that I can scarcely have a desire to be in any other circumstances. Thus our gracious friend is ever near, and fulfils His promise that He will not leave us comfortless. Probably, my dear girl, we should not have half of the experimental knowledge of Jesus' love, which now blesses us, were we not brought into the very situation wherein His presence is most suitable and most to be appreciated ; and for my own part I must say that dispensations of affliction, whether of body or mind, have ever been the channels conveying dearest visits from my Lord. This I know, my dear friend, is an experience in which you can unite with me, and therefore we will lift up our voice together, and extol the name of Him whose faithfulness and truth is our inexhaustible theme. If we experience such refreshing draughts from the *wells* of salvation, what will be the fulness of bliss when we drink the rich tide from the bosom of our God in the heavenly kingdom !

How little can we conceive of what is laid up for us ; how little understand the nature of that inheritance which we possess as fellow-heirs with Christ ! Let us be constantly exercising the faith which has been wrought in us by the Spirit, so as to draw forth more

and more of our portion whilst we are travelling here below : and let us labour to animate all with whom we are journeying, in the same holy fervency of expectant love,—this is one of the dearest motives to make our present life valuable.

Thanks be to the Lord that He has knit your heart to himself in *this* disposition ! The blessing is unspeakable when natural affections, which in their kind and degree are strong and therefore perilous, are so arrested by the divine power as to bring them over into the entire possession of their rightful Lord. And you, my friend, may rejoice in this operation, and glorify God for having laid hold upon your heart ; and whilst teaching it the unsatisfactory nature of all human objects of love, filling it with persuasion that Jesus *can* and *will* gratify all its largest capacity for loving and desiring to be loved. O may we ever be satisfied with this possession, and bless the name of this dear Redeemer, who has caused us to say with holy devotedness, “ My beloved is mine and I am His ! ”

Farewell, my very dear friend ;—may we ever abound in love to each other by the blessed Spirit who cements us together as part of the precious mystical building.

M. S.

CCVI.

*Peculiar Injunction—Temptations to Affections—Reasons for Hope of a Blessing
—Christian Associations—Fountain ever open.*

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

I HAVE much to thank you for, and much to express of that affection which, I trust, will gather strength as we

approach nearer to the final perfection of our new life. Let me express my thanks for your kind remembrance of me in your little parcel ; every token of your union with me in Jesus is welcome to my heart. I need not assure you of this,—experience tells you the history of christian oneness which belongs to those who are wedded to Christ ; and to this I need only appeal, and you will be in possession of what I feel for you.

It gave me much pleasure to read that part of your letter wherein you speak of the necessity of manifesting decision, and of avoiding all recourse to human schemes for the promotion of the objects we espouse ; in this our minds flow in one channel, and I believe according to the mind of God also ; for surely we know how, in the first place, we are under a peculiar injunction to come out and be separate ; and we also know that it is not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord that prosperity waits upon our way. O how it grieves the Spirit when we will not hearken to these rules, or yield in simplicity to what the voice of Jesus speaks ! Let us not grieve Him, my friend, but evermore strive to maintain affections that are contented with the Lord for our portion, and with that portion of success *He* may be pleased to bestow upon any work we undertake.

By living in more intimate converse with Him we obtain this disposition ; it is certainly the means by which He sheds abroad His own mind within us ; and I am sure it is the purest, dearest delight a redeemed one can know. Are you living in this sweet region, my beloved friend ? and does your head rest on the Saviour's bosom, and your heart repose on his heart ? If so, sure I am that you want no other repose ; and although there is, alas ! in affectionate dispositions a perpetual inclination to go forth to kindred souls beyond the line of prudence and caution, yet you find with all such that,

after all, we are obliged by experience of the comparative emptiness of the cisterns, again to come to the Fountain, where there is ever fresh delight.

I send you my little book, with my true love ;—it goes to you, my friend, accompanied with my earnest prayer, that although it is a small thing, it may be blessed in God's great strength. I am encouraged to hope something from it, because of its simplicity, and of the feeling I have of dependance ; for I know that it is thus our Lord chooses to act in furthering His own cause ; and as all the excellency of the power is of Him, by whatever instrument He works, we may all put in a claim to His loving notice when we are employed in such a precious service.

You know that I have a desire, so far as efforts may be used, to give circulation to this little book on Sympathy, and you know my reasons for the desire, and will enter into them. I do not therefore shrink from asking you to speak of it, so far as it may appear to you likely to be useful in supplying such as may not sufficiently have considered the points so subtilely proposed respecting Christ's humanity, as to be furnished with answers to the scheme.

I know many dear disciples in this situation, by no means inclined to fall in with views which militate against their hope in the atonement *by blood*, but not able to give satisfactory replies to those who produce the reasonings held by opposers of this sacred truth. May the Eternal Spirit be abundantly, my dear friend, with the church in the wilderness, and the truth as it is in Jesus be maintained in its purity !

You know, my dear girl, that my arrangements are of necessity conducted on a regular distribution of time, so that, excepting by appointments, I do not have much of conversational intercourse. Generally speaking, I

think something of more settled christian enquiry is most useful. Much precious time is frequently lost in desultory remarks, which leave no refreshing influence; and instead of experiencing establishment of soul by this means, we are left with a sense of exhaustion. Perhaps there are no occasions wherein we have greater need of watchfulness, than when, *as saints*, we meet together; and on all occasions it is good for us to have the habit of recalling what has past, and of striving to derive some abiding improvement. I often think of the little meeting on Saturdays, wherein you are in association with a few of a kindred spirit with your own. It is a privilege to have affections towards such communion, and also to be put in situations where they may be gratified. Small as your company is, yet you meet under the banner of the Lord, and a blessing must necessarily rest upon each of you whilst so gathered beneath covenant love. We have tasted together the faithfulness of our Lord, to His promise of being with His disciples; and sweet was the participation of the banquet with which we were blessed last summer! I shall rejoice if the Lord's providence restores such refreshment to us in some future day of our pilgrimage.

Farewell, my beloved friend, may choicest impartations refresh your spirit, and the fountain be ever open to your *cheerful* access—*open* it always is, but sometimes we approach it with less of vigorous joy than is due from hearts that owe so much, and have experienced so much. The Comforter, however, is the Spirit of liberty, and I trust He will increasingly anoint you with this unction!

Ever believe me yours in this tender and faithful affection of soul. I feel it, my friend, and bear you in my heart before the Lord, &c.

M. S.

CCVII.

Opportunities for praise—Perfected Hosannahs—Heresies made a Test of true Believers—Points of holy Solicitude—Acknowledged Blessings.

MY BELOVED FRIEND,

MANY and continued have been my thoughts and prayers for you, and my wishes to hold some communion with you through the channel of a letter. At length I sit down to take the opportunity for greeting you, kindly offered by Mr. ——. I will, in the first place, affectionately thank you for sending such sweet memorials of your love, and I *know* you will be pleased when I tell you that they occupy the space above my chimney-piece, in the little room where we prayed together ; they are placed all together there, and I frequently have my mind's eye carried away to your dear self, whilst my bodily eyes rest on the objects before me. I am sure your affectionate heart will like that it should be thus, and will rejoice to think that in such an holy association of ideas as arise on these occasions, you are so nearly interested. May we increasingly possess that fellowship in Jesus which is the peculiar portion of the Lord's redeemed, and drink into his blessed spirit with increase of high delight !

These, my beloved friend, are the subjects of interest to our hearts, and in them we find our dearest joys in time ; whilst in looking forward to eternity we anticipate all the fulness of bliss which we know they will impart. I rejoice in an opportunity for saying, How good, how gracious, how powerful is our souls' Beloved ! and how does he take the occasions which are best adapted for shewing forth his grace and love, to come and speak to the soul in peace ! Perhaps no occasion of more inte-

rest to my soul could arise, than that of seeing my dear girl laid on her bed under the influence of a malady which for three days kept us in suspense as to its termination. There are more than usual ties subsisting between her and me. Our long association in the Lord's work, her important station here, which, I may say, none that we see could so fill, with many other considerations, combine to render her life a subject of interest to my heart beyond that of mere natural bonds. This, of course, gives new openings for the display of that sustaining presence which keeps the soul in rest. And when we find the arms of our Lord underneath us, should we not tell of his goodness, and join the company whose delight it is to say, "He hath done all things well." If such be the power imparted whilst we dwell in this tabernacle of clay, what will be the sense of glorious liberty and joy which attends our perfected Hosannahs! Little, my beloved friend, can we conceive of the inheritance laid up for us, but *believing* we rejoice.

Your enquiry respecting the little book on Sympathy I had expected to answer by *sending* you one. Many reasons exist which render me desirous to bring it out now, if only on account of the clear testimony of my own views upon the important point which has been so lamentably discussed. It is lamentable, my friend, because it is error—and error proposed in a spirit that ill becomes the meek disciples of Jesus. Yet we should bear in mind that "there must be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest." 1 Cor. xi. 19. Not that they are ordained of God, but they are amongst the means which he permits for the purpose of proving his own; and no doubt they tend to keep the doctrine pure in the true church, by calling forth energies which might otherwise slumber. Therefore let us

not act inconsistently, by falling into alarms or unreasonable grief, but rise cheerfully to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to demonstrate that we *live* by the assurance that *the Lord reigneth*. We are very sure that the government rests upon Jesus' shoulders—that all events are consequently regulated by Him, and that we, as his subjects and friends, have nothing to do but to direct a holy solicitude towards our own responsibility dependently upon him, and to feel calmly confident that all is well which is under His supreme rule. How happy—how free from care might we be, were we to put forth these precious principles which so intimately belong to our faith, and reduce them to the daily occurrences of life, whether in things temporal or spiritual.

I propose printing the Exposition of the Lord's Prayer, perhaps at the close of the year, if I live. At present I am writing out the subjects which have engaged me lately on Monday evenings, intending also to print them. It will be a little book, and may, by God's blessing, be useful. He has hitherto been abundantly gracious in acknowledging that part of my labour which belongs to my publications; and from time to time I receive merciful intimations of this from strangers, especially as it respects my Comments. I am grateful to Him for turning His loving smile upon me in these things, and for making me thereby feel more humbled and more affectionately dependant on Himself. The subject I have lately had in my meeting is the investigation of the heart, passing through the several stages of a believer's course, from his state of nature to his ripened state of grace. I am wished to print it, and it is as well to have them ready, should I determine to do so on reflection.

And now, my beloved friend, I bid you an affectionate

farewell, beseeching the Lord everlastingly to enrich you with every blessing. O may He hear and answer my request, and shed into your heart His tenderest peace. Will you give my love to those dear friends with you, whom I know and love in the Lord. And believe me, in truest love, your faithfully affectionate fellow-pilgrim,

M. S.

CCVIII.

Answers to special Enquiries on an important doctrinal Point.

ALTHOUGH I so lately addressed you, I once again sit down to my desk that I may reply to those points of discussion on which you have invited my opinion, prefacing only this consideration, that I earnestly trust the word of the living God is the rule by which *alone*, in the Spirit's power, we would examine, receive, or reject anything proposed to us as an article of faith. I consider the question that is now agitated, respecting the Person of our dear Lord, as one of the deepest importance, both as His honour is concerned and our salvation is proposed, and therefore it is that I delay no longer in expressing to you, my dear friend, the view which I stedfastly believe to be according to the revelation which God has given of His blessed Son. May that blessed Son be with us, to open the mystery of His incarnation to our souls in such a way as shall correspond with His will.

In the first place, I will answer the questions you propose. You present me with two—one respecting the *likeness of God*, in which man was originally made;

and then of the *likeness of sinful flesh*, in which the incarnate Son was made. Gen. i. 26. Rom. viii. 3. A comparison of these two passages, and a concession that the term *likeness* signifies the same in both, will, I conceive, at once overthrow the argument that Jesus was born in our *fallen* nature as *corrupted*.

Now is it not undeniably true that the first Adam was not, and could not be made in God's likeness *essentially*? He could not have the essential nature of God, and was condemned for aspiring after it. To suppose him in the likeness of God, according to this acceptance of the phrase, must involve this necessary consequence, that as Adam could fall or sin, so could God, they being in nature alike! Of course this blasphemous notion we reject; therefore in Genesis the expression must mean a likeness *not* involving a participation of essential nature. The parallel use of the expression in Romans seems *expounded* by the first use of it—“God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,” &c. In its *likeness*, but not of its essentially fallen nature. As the *first* man was *not so* exalted as to be like God, so the *second* man was not so *debased* as to be like *corrupted* nature. The first man was so far in God's likeness as to be capable of exercising lordship, rule, &c.; the second man, *so far in* the likeness of sinful flesh as to be capable of discharging the condition and of obtaining the privileges belonging to the restoration of man to his original standing; and if you observe the reasoning of the apostle in the context of that passage in Romans, you will see that this is the drift of his argument. He is striving to shew how man is delivered from the body of death, and from condemnation by the law of the *Spirit of life* in *Christ Jesus*; who, as a second representative Head, had endured the curse, fulfilled the requirement, and obtained for man the restored

privilege of spiritual liberty and righteousness. I therefore conclude that these two passages signify a likeness under certain necessary and unavoidable limitations ; and that the great limitation is this, a *non-participation* of the essential nature, on one side, of that of the divine Perfections ; and on the other, of that of human corruption.

You next ask me, my dear friend, was the Virgin Mary a *fallen* creature ; and, if so, was not Jesus partaker of her corrupted nature ? I answer, Mary was fallen, but I deny the necessity that on this account the nature of Jesus should be defiled or an inheritor of the original curse. If it had been so, there had been no need of a miraculous conception ; Jesus could have assumed a body as other men, and could equally have been sanctified by the Holy Ghost, from his conception, as they who hold the opinion of His corrupted nature would pretend. But His flesh, whilst conceived in the Virgin, was a body peculiarly prepared by the Father ; (Heb. x. 5.) and but a *body*. The human *nature* consists of *body and soul*. The curse entailed on man is on body and soul, as the creature called man. Flesh is but the sensitive part of man, acted upon either by the soul or by other interior causes ; and the *flesh* of Christ being immediately produced, in order that it should *not* participate in the descending curse through ordinary generation, became a fit holy vehicle in which to put the holy soul, pure from the hand of God, and so to make that "*holy thing*" sufficiently *flesh* to identify Him with human nature ; yet produced in an extraordinary and miraculous way, to *cut off*, as it were, the *entail* of the curse.

Remember, my beloved friend, that any other Christ could not have answered the end in view. As one born with *entailed sin* upon him, he must have needed atonement for *himself*. The Holy Ghost is never re-

vealed as taking an office of this kind ; it is his office to sanctify, and to apply the blood ; and at whatever period you date the sanctifying of Christ in the womb, or to whatever unlimited measure you give the Holy Ghost to him, you cannot do away with the necessity for *blood*, without which there is no remission either for *original* or actual guilt. And where is the blood that you would offer for Jesus ? or could there be blood for Him ? or could Jehovah dispense with His absolute requirement in *His* case ? A thing impossible with God. Where would be the nature pure enough to be an atonement for the millions born in sin ! I think this is lost sight of—men seem to *limit* the need of atonement to *actual* sins, whereas *original* sin is not atoned without sacrifice.

If then you ask my opinion respecting the human nature of Jesus, I would give it thus :—I believe it to be free from the original curse, and not produced after our *fallen* condition. Hence, he says that Satan hath nothing in him. I believe that, consequently, there was *no cause* of death dwelling in Him which *necessarily* dwelleth in flesh corrupted by the fall : therefore he says, “I lay down my life of myself ;” I believe that there was *no* spring of bitterness, however latent it might be, that *could* send out a corrupt stream ; therefore He was not only holy and harmless, but *separate* from sinners. Respecting the nature of His *humiliation*, I conceive that He was in the likeness of sinful flesh by the circumstances of want, sorrow, shame, poverty, and all the evils *produced* by sinful flesh. Herein he was like man in the wilderness, not in the Eden. I surmise also that he was like sinful flesh, in respect of the external personal change produced by the fall ; the first Adam, it seems probable, was distinguished by some luminous covering which departed from him when he fell, and he knew that he was naked, and

it was more than probable this was the likeness of God, in which he was made ; the *likeness of that glory*, with which the eternal Son was clothed when he walked in the garden and appeared to men. On the Mount of transfiguration, Jesus allowed His disciples to behold *this glory*—the proper dress or appearance of the Word who was made flesh, but as it were a robe put off for a little, that He might *appear* in the likeness of *sinful flesh, disrobed and stripped*; that he might *receive* the imputation of the curse, which he seems to have shewn them by the transfiguration, was *voluntary* on his part, not entailed; and accordingly Moses and Elias testified to Him in *this glory*, as much as to say, This is the uncorrupted, the glorious second Adam, of which we testified. One *making himself* of no reputation, but properly still possessed of what innocence has a right to possess—evidencing Jesus Christ. As in the likeness of the unfallen Adam, I conceive Him to be like the first man, liable to temptation ; I will admit liable to, or capable of falling, so far as *innocent* human nature is capable ; His *not* falling I do not ascribe to an influence of the Holy Ghost, acting upon a nature inheriting what might or could possibly assimilate with the sin of the tempter or the temptation ; but that He stood in His *own* sinless perfection of innocence, which remained immovable. If I do not believe this, I do not place Him as a second Adam, for I make His circumstances wholly different ; and if I do not believe this, I give the glory of His standing to the Holy Ghost, not to man, properly so considered. And I might say, why was not an equal measure of the Holy Ghost given to the *first* man, and then *he* must *necessarily* have stood. But this does not answer to the idea of a *responsible* creature ; to one who though free to fall was *sufficient* to stand ; and if Jesus be not exactly in the responsibili-

ties belonging to human nature, as first created by Jehovah, I cannot imagine Him to be a suitable surety for us. As to the death of His body, I believe it to have been His own voluntary act, by the reception of *our* imputed guilt, and that although, as human nature, it was capable of being destroyed by violence, &c.—for defence against which He humbled himself, to be dependant upon the Father in covenant,—that yet there was no more a *principle* of death in His nature than there was in Adam before His fall. Such a view of Jesus, our soul's Beloved, seems to exalt Him where He ought to be; fulfilling the precious witness of the Spirit respecting Him as the Holy One of God, and *our* Holy One; and we might branch out these several particulars into unlimited subjects of meditation, gratitude and praise; until our admiring souls are lost in the ocean of eternal, unfathomable, unsearchable love!

But I have said enough to shew you my own sentiments, and, I would hope, to persuade your mind. Believe me, I would not press the point nor disturb your thoughts, were I not wholly persuaded that it is a subject involving our dearest interests. Many other things hang dependant on this truth. O may the Lord keep us from the first step of error; it is an awful day, wherein we have need to abide in the breast of Jesus, and to try the spirits, whether they be of God.

M. S.

CCIX.

Erroneous Ideas of Doctrine a Cause of Despondency.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM a stranger to you excepting by name, yet I address you in the endearing bond of the Christian hope, believing that we are mutually lovers of Jesus and heirs of his kingdom. I hear of you as sometimes enduring that most painful of all exercises, a degree of spiritual oppression, which from the testimony of our friend Mrs. —— seems to be without any apparent reason. She speaks of you as following the steps of the Lord, and as living in close conformity with his requirements; so that, as she says, there is nothing to which this experience can be attributed as to your life and conversation. It is however to be observed that the Comforter may be grieved by some hidden evil, which is imperceptible to man, and which, in many instances, possibly is not suspected by the individual; and it is on this latter ground that I am now induced to proffer an affectionate suggestion.

I have seen many examples of believers who have lived in bondage to legal feelings, and in whom the joy of salvation has been depressed, when according to all human judgment there seems to be every reason for holy rejoicing in the Lord—and in all these instances I believe that the seat of the evil is a practical ignorance of the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness alone. Shall I ask you to scrutinize your own feelings on this point, and to ascertain whether this may be the case with you? I do not ask you to forgive me for thus giving you an errand into your own heart—it is a

privilege to be a true heart-searcher, and as this act always gives us an errand likewise to the Lord, the privilege is doubled. It is very easy to have correct views of gospel truth, and to have an ability to converse upon them, whilst an experimental application of them is not powerfully known, and I think that this observation is most verified in respect of the doctrine of justification. We are naturally self-righteous—conviction of our sin forces us into the sense of our utter inability to meet the divine requirement in ourselves; yet the leaven of our legal spirit still exists within us, and we speciously excuse it upon the ground of our christian experience. This we do by substituting our renewed state for our old nature, and as we cannot find our comfort in the latter, we seek to derive it from the former; hence we become disconsolate, cast down, and doubtful of our state in every mortifying discovery which we make, or go on our way in habitual depression because we are not all we wish we were. It is true our short-comings and many infirmities may justly give us pain, and we are called upon ingenuously to mourn over the development of our evil nature; but this should not so discompose us as to darken our views of this glorious salvation which provides for every thing that a sinner can need; may we not say, that genuine humiliation leads us into a contentment *to be nothing*, and to find and feel that *we are nothing*; and that whenever these discoveries disorder and sadden the believer, it must be considered an effect of some unmortified reluctance to be found so wholly helpless and worthless in self. If indeed the Holy Ghost has effected humiliation in us so as to render us willing to be thus abased, and yet we are disconsolate, our fault may be some darkness or unbelief as to the mode in which we are accepted as righteous in our surety, and in this case we have to wrestle for

clearer views ; but, I conclude, that such is not your state, since I am told that your perception of the several branches of the blessed work of Immanuel is scriptural and comprehensive. What is it then that casts you down ? Is it not then that you are probably seeking to draw pure consolation from your own sanctification, such as may be your sufficient spring, to the undervaluing and darkening of the glory of the justifying work of Jesus ? We are disposed to reverse the order of things, and to make justification and sanctification change places in the arrangement of covenant-blessings, and by this disorder in our own experience distemper the state of our soul. Our beloved Lord is rich in all his grace, and will not give his salvation in one part and not another. Praised be His name, He is the divine author of a glorious work of sanctification, which He begins and will perfect in us ; neither can we have any legitimate right to the comforts of redemption without experiencing this operation ; but we must not use his own gifts as weapons against his own glory, and should be careful not to make any imparted work of his grace in us, a *rival* that should *share* the dependence and trust of our heart.

Come, my dear friend, to the open arms of Jesus, where love and peace are treasured up and are given in all the pureness of the everlasting covenant. You will find holiness increase in proportion to your sense of liberty, and that, in the appropriation of Jesus' love to your own soul, you will possess a sure and sweetly constraining motive unto all that is lovely and pure. I am earnestly desirous that you should possess the whole enjoyment of the gospel liberty, not only for yourself, but for the sake of all with whom you are connected. It is for the glory of Him whom we love that our profession should be cheerful, and our hopes manifestly

support us ; even as the scripture has testified of the Christian faith ; and so much is it our part to be jealous for the honour of our Master, that we should urge our own souls to rise above the pressure of private feeling, in order to exhibit before men the *true* features of a disciple. These are powerful motives to excite in us a disposition to wrestle against all temptation to despondency, and with such a Lord as Jesus is, to pass along our way with smiles of holy confidence amidst all its perils !—He is faithful, and what we have committed unto Him He will keep.

I do not apologize for intruding thus upon you ; believing as I do that we are united in Christ, we owe to each other whatever we may as fellow-members be ordained to impart ; and it would indeed unfeignedly rejoice my soul, if, in any degree, I might be privileged to speak a word of comfort to your precious soul. In this hope and prayer allow me to say that I am in truth your very affectionate friend,

M. S.

THE END.

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